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CONFIDENTIAL.

(7655.)

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F.O.

424

# FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING

# ASIATIC TURKEY.

[In continuation of Confidential Paper No. 7332.]

200

1900.

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[In continuation of Confidential Paper No. 7332.]

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1900.

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ERRATA.

Page 121, No. 143, line 1. For "4th October" read "12th October."
Page 140, No. 166, line 1. For "No. 431" read "No. 421."

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**CONFIDENTIAL.**

# Further Correspondence respecting Asiatic Turkey.

[In continuation of Confidential Paper No. 7322.]

## No. 1.

*Sir N. O Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received January* 1, 1900.)

(No. 601. Confidential.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, December* 27, 1899.

WITH reference to my Confidential despatch No. 554 of the 30th November last I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the Agreement between the Ottoman Minister of Commerce and Public Works and Dr. von Siemens, President of the Anatolian Railway Company, respecting the proposed extension of the latter's line from Konieh to Bagdad and Basrah.

In this document, which has been given to me in confidence, the German Company agrees to construct the extension within a maximum period of eight years on conditions to be determined by common accord between the contracting parties; and it undertakes to make the necessary investigations immediately, and to submit the draft Convention and "Cahier des Charges" to the Sublime Porte without delay. The question of guarantees is to be discussed with the other conditions on the completion of the preliminary investigation.

The Company engages never to cede or transfer its existing lines or the one in contemplation to any other Association. On the other hand, the Ottoman Government reserves a right to purchase the new line at any time. It engages, however, in case of purchase, either to work the line itself or through the Anatolian Company.

Failing agreement on the conditions or on the course of the railway, each of the contracting parties resumes its entire freedom of action.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

### Inclosure in No. 1.

*Agreement dated December* 11 (23), 1899.

ENTRE son Excellence Zihni Pacha, Ministre du Commerce et des Travaux Publics, agissant au nom du Gouvernement Impérial, d'une part, et M. le Dr. Georges von Siemens, Président du Conseil de l'Administration de la Société du Chemin de Fer Ottoman d'Anatolie, agissant au nom de la dite Société d'autre part. Il a été, en conformité de l'Iradé Impérial, émané à la suite d'une décision du Conseil des Ministres, soumise à la haute sanction souveraine, convenu et arrêté ce qui suit :—

La Société du Chemin de Fer d'Anatolie s'engage à construire dans un délai maximum de huit ans, et d'exploiter une ligne de chemin de fer à largeur normale de 1 metre 44 centim., partant de Konia et aboutissant par Bagdad et Basra, et ce aux conditions et garanties dont les modalités seront déterminées d'un commun accord entre la Sublime Porte et la Société.

La Sublime Porte reconnaît qu'il est conforme aux intérêts publics d'accorder à la Société du Chemin de Fer d'Anatolie la Concession demandée.

Il est convenu que la Société fera procéder immédiatement aux études nécessaires et soumettra au plus tôt à l'approbation de la Sublime Porte les projets de Convention et du Cahier des Charges.

La question des garanties sera discutée après l'achèvement des études et sur la demande de la Société en même temps que les autres conditions.

Il est entendu que la Société s'engage, dès aujourd'hui, à ne jamais ni céder ni transférer à une autre Société quelconque soit la ligne existante de Haidar Pacha à Angora et à Konia, soit celle à construire de Konia à Bagdad et Basra. Le Gouvernement Impérial, de son côté, conserve également la faculté d'exercer, à quelque époque que cela soit, son droit de rachat sur la ligne de Konia à Basra. En cas de ce rachat, si le Gouvernement Impérial ne juge pas convenable d'exploiter par ses propres agents, il n'en cédera pas l'exploitation à l'autre Compagnie, mais il promet de le faire exploiter par la Société d'Anatolie par voie de bail.

En cas qu'une entente ne serait pas possible entre les parties contractantes tant sur les conditions de la Convention que sur le tracé de la ligne, elles reprendront toute leur liberté d'action sans qu'aucune d'elles puisse demander ou réclamer de l'autre la moindre indemnité sous quelque forme que ce soit.

La présente Convention a été, conformément à l'Iradé Impérial, dressée en double expédition et signée et échangée à Constantinople le 11 (23) Décembre, 1899 (20 Chaban, 1317).

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## No. 2.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received January* 1, 1900.)

(No. 602. Confidential.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, December* 27, 1899.

WITH reference to my immediately preceding despatch I think it will be of interest that I should briefly report the substance of a conversation which I had with Dr. von Siemens on the 23rd instant.

After informing me that he had just signed a preliminary Convention for the construction of the Konia–Bagdad–Basra Railway, which secured preferential rights to the Anatolian Railway Company, and recognized the principle of a kilometric guarantee. Dr. von Siemens said that the initiative in the matter was taken, as far as he was concerned, by the Sultan, who had asked him some time ago whether he was willing to construct the line. He was not very keen to undertake such a gigantic enterprise, but he knew the interest which his Sovereign took in the matter, and he promised to consider the proposal upon his arrival in Berlin.

When he had thought over the ways and means, and discussed the subject with his friends, he decided to enlist British capital in the undertaking. Before taking any steps, however, in this direction he went to the Berlin Foreign Office and asked whether there was any objection to British co-operation. He was informed that there was none whatever, and upon this he decided to make overtures to the Smyrna-Aidin Railway, with a view to combination. It would, he said, be a long story to tell the whole history of the negotiations that ensued, but although he had received every encouragement from three of the principal Directors or shareholders, the long and short of it was that when the general meeting of the Smyrna–Aidin Railway took place to discuss his proposals they were rejected and he was "mis à la porte."

Overtures were then made to him by the Cassaba Railway Company, and although he preferred to co-operate with the English than with the French, whom he considered unsatisfactory people to deal with in business matters, he had to do the best he could, and the offer made by the Cassaba Company being acceptable he closed with it. He did not, however, altogether despair of ultimately co-operating with the English Company, and a stipulation was made by which the Anatolian and the Cassaba Companies agreed to forego such proportionate share of their interest in the enterprise as would content the British market in case of an agreement either with the Smyrna-Aidin Company or British capitalists.

Upon my remarking that it seemed to me that the negotiations with the English Company would have resulted differently if the bondholders and shareholders had clearly understood that the proposal was one not of sale and purchase, but of financial and administrative co-operation upon fair and equal terms, Dr. von Siemens replied that this



very possibly was so, but that there was no doubt that two of the principal holders in the railway certainly knew his objects and views, for they had discussed the subject thoroughly with him, and they had themselves written the letter which he had addressed to the Company.

He did not, however, despair of ultimately coming to an understanding with the Smyrna–Aidin Railway, and he hoped later on to reopen the negotiations with fair prospect of success.

In his opinion it would be far better to make the line as international as possible. He did not conceal from himself that sooner or later it would probably encounter very serious opposition from Russia. In any case the capital engaged, which he estimated roughly at 16,000,000*l.*, was a large sum and part of it could be found more easily in London than elsewhere. If the investors were satisfied with a Western rate of interest they would have no reason to complain, but if they looked to very large profits, such as they usually exacted when they placed their money in the near or Far East they would be disappointed. The population of the country was too sparse to afford large railway receipts for a long time to come, much of the merchandize was not remunerative cargo, and the condition of the country was far from satisfactory.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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## No. 3.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received January* 1, 1900.)

(No. 603. Confidential.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, December* 27, 1899.

IN continuation of my immediately preceding despatch I beg to report some further remarks made to me by Dr. von Siemens, which I feel sure he would wish me to treat as confidential.

Referring to the pressure which the Emperor had exercised in order to induce him to undertake the construction of the Bagdad Railway, he said that the really serious difficulty lay in the anticipated opposition of Russia, but this had been surmounted by the adriotness of his Sovereign. When the Emperor of Russia visited Potsdam the Emperor William spoke of his railway scheme, and finding that it did not meet with a very encouraging reception His Majesty explained that he was already engaged to carry it through, and that it was a matter which he had most deeply at heart. Yielding to the stronger influence the Emperor of Russia gave way and the matter was settled. This, said Dr. von Siemens, was the upshot of the Potsdam visit.

Your Lordship, no doubt, recollects the incidents of the acquisition of Kiao Chow and will remark the similarity between the Emperor of Germany's tactics upon that occasion and upon this.

As regards the Sultan, the leverage was very simple. His Majesty owned a great part of the Vilayets of Bagdad and Basra, acquired by purchase, by confiscation, or by so-called inheritance. He worked upon this, laying particular stress upon the personal advantage to His Majesty when the railway was built, and the great increase in the value of property. The effect was what he expected, and the Sultan is now looking forward to reap enormous financial profits out of the undertaking, forgetting that eight years is a long time in His Majesty's life.

Dr. von Siemens went on to make some interesting remarks on the finances of Russia. He had not had any transactions with the Russian Government since 1876 till a short time ago, and in the interval the French market had lent Russia some 240,000,000*l.*, or about 6 milliards of francs. It was a very profitable business for the French bankers, and he had lost a great deal of money by giving it up. He had undertaken a loan last year simply because he believed the French would have done so if he had refused. He was now not so sure of this, and he was not inclined to come in again at the eleventh hour.

Dr. von Siemens seemed anxious to know whether I was in favour of the Smyrna–Aidin Company and British capitalists co-operating with the Anatolian Company. I said that, personally, I was, and that I had reason to believe—what was of infinitely more importance—that your Lordship was not opposed to it, provided it was on the basis of co-operation on fair terms. There was, however, I said, a broader view of the question upon which the ultimate decision probably depended, and that was whether we wanted another route to India, and whether the Constantinople–Basra route was the best. To

this Dr. von Siemens replied that he believed it was, and that, in his opinion, it was better to stand on two legs than on one.

The attitude of the Russian Embassy with regard to the Concession is one of sullen inactivity, and Dr. von Siemens' story explains this. The Concession is certainly not calculated to improve the relations between the two countries, and in so far as it may conduce to make the German Government more tractable with other Powers, Her Majesty's Government has, I consider, no cause for displeasure.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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No. 4.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received January* 1, 1900.)

(No. 606.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December* 27, 1899.

ON receipt of the inclosed despatch from Mr. Jones respecting the intention of the local authorities of Diarbekir to collect the military exemption tax, with arrears, from the Christian communities of that town, I brought the matter unofficially to the notice of the Grand Vizier, pointing out the misery which would be produced by the proposed course.

His Highness said that orders had been sent by the Porte to the provinces to levy the tax only in districts which had not suffered from the disturbances.

I learn that the Armenian Patriarch recently made representations on this subject direct to the Sultan, and that the above instructions were decided upon by the Council of Ministers, to whom His Majesty had referred the matter. It will be difficult to determine which districts under these instructions are entitled to exemption, and it is to be regretted that they leave so much to the discretion of the local authorities, which, I fear, will not always be wisely exercised.

I have informed Mr. Jones of my representations to the Grand Vizier, and of His Highness' reply.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure in No. 4.

*Mr. Jones to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 40.)
Sir, *Diarbekir, December* 12, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to report that considerable agitation prevails amongst the native Christian population of this city in consequence of an announcement made by the authorities to the effect that the military commutation tax ("bedeli askeri"), with all arrears, is now to be demanded from them, and the Armenian Bishop has been told that, on this account, from his community alone the sum of 12,000 liras (£T. 12,000) will be required, a sum which, in view of the greatly impoverished condition of the Armenian community still suffering from the effects of the troubles, must be characterized as preposterous.

I have the honour to add that I am informed that the same exorbitant demands are being made upon the other Christian communities here, and the attempt to enforce payment cannot but result in the infliction of great misery upon the rayahs of this city.

I venture respectfully to submit that the consideration that this is almost certain to be the deplorable result of the forcible levying of these taxes will only render the measure the more acceptable to the Vali is shown beyond possibility of doubt by his Excellency's unbroken record of tyranny and oppression in the administration of this province.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. F. JONES.

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No. 5.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received January* 8, 1900.)

(No. 609.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December* 30, 1899.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 582 of the 14th instant, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, giving further particulars respecting the dismissal of the Defterdar of the Damascus Vilayet.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure in No. 5.

*Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 76.)
Sir, *Damascus, December* 18, 1899.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 70 of the 4th instant, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that the Defterdar is definitely dismissed, his successor, Muhi-ed-din Bey, Defterdar of Angora, being expected to arrive here shortly.

As regards the sum of £T. 15,000, the immediate payment of which, as I informed your Excellency in the despatch under reference, the ex-Defterdar declared his inability to make, it was required, not for Constantinople, but as the contribution of this vilaget towards the payment of a sum of £T. 30,000 which is due annually during a period of five years to the Damascus-Beirut Railway Company as indemnity for their abstention from commencing the construction of the projected line to Birejik on the Euphrates.

It would also appear that the ex-Defterdar had, a short time previously, been equally unable to comply with an order to send a sum of £T. 10,000 to Beirut, in part payment of a havalé for £T. 25,000 presented on behalf of the Ministry of Marine, and payable from the chest of the Beirut Vilayet. The whole sum not being procurable there, recourse was had to Damascus with the result reported.

I am informed that Mohammed Bey (the ex-Defterdar), gave as his reason for declining to make these two payments the existing financial straits of this vilayet, there being already, according to his calculations, a prospective deficit of £T. 50,000 on this next year's budget. Moreover, he pointed out that there would shortly be a heavy call on him for the supply of the expenses of the Haj, so that he did not consider that he was justified in depleting the treasury at this particular juncture. His language, it appears, was firm, his reply to several telegraphic orders being in each case a resolute refusal.

I believe there is no doubt that Mohammed Bey is an honest, straightforward official, and his behaviour on this occasion is applauded by all impartial persons who know the real facts of the case.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

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No. 6.

*The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 8.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, January* 10, 1900.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 606 of the 27th ultimo on the subject of the announcement made by the local authorities of Diarbekir that the military exemption tax with all arrears was to be demanded from the Christian communities of that place.

I approve your Excellency's action in bringing this matter unofficially to the notice of the Grand Vizier.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

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No. 7.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received January* 15.)

(No. 13.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January* 9, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 589 of the 20th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, respecting the recent revolutionary raid from across the Persian frontier into the Abagha Plain.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure in No. 7.

*Major Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 49.)
Sir, *Van, December* 22, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to report that on the 15th instant a band of Armenian revolutionists, numbering six persons, crossed the Persian frontier and entered the Abagha Plain, near the village of Kuchan.

They were met by Hamidieh Kurds of the Haideranli tribe, and after a sharp struggle were all killed; the Kurds also losing four men killed and six wounded.

In Abagha Plain there are no Armenian villages, but Kuchan contains a large number of Armenians, whom Kop Mehmet Bey has induced to settle there, and whom he personally protects.

No damage as regards life or property has been done to these men during the raid.

Regular troops, two companies of infantry, were moved up immediately from Bergri, and are now in Kuchan together with the Chief of Police of Van.

Four men left Van to join the revolutionaries, three of them having been but recently released from prison by the general amnesty of the Sultan, and who are among the worst characters of the town.

They took a guide from an Armenian monastery at Bergri, and apparently just managed to join the revolutionists before the struggle.

They were unarmed, were taken prisoners, and are now lodged in Van prison. Their intention was undoubtedly to guide the party into Van, their avowed destination.

Two days later another band of twenty-one revolutionaries crossed the frontier somewhat farther north, and according to the official report, which was given me to read, after a prolonged engagement they were all killed. This still wants confirmation, but is probably true, although some may subsequently be found to have escaped.

The most serious result of these raids was at Arjish, round which is a large Armenian population.

Directly the news of the raid spread, a considerable number of armed Kurds, mostly of the Kalkanli tribe, began to arrive in the neighbourhood, undoubtedly for the purpose of massacre and pillage when the opportunity offered.

The Armenians were much frightened, and some fled in here; but the situation was promptly saved by the action of the Vali, who sent the most stringent orders to the Kaïmakam and Military Commandant of Arjish that the Kurds were to be dispersed at once, and if they did not go they were to be shot down.

This had the desired effect; they have gone, and confidence has been restored.

As the Vali told me with justifiable pride that at least his vilayet was not like that of Erzeroum, where recently in Alashgird they had such a deplorable massacre of innocent people after a raid there.

As the Vali has worked hard this year to secure the tranquillity of the country, and has gained the confidence of all classes of the population, I venture to submit that the present occasion is a suitable one for His Majesty the Sultan to show his appreciation by giving him some decoration.

I understand officials at Bitlis were decorated after the recent capture of the Armenian revolutionary, Sirop, there.



And the Mutessarif of Bashkala has been promoted Pasha for his share in quelling the attack by revolutionists on Shereef Bey this summer.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

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No. 8.

*Sir F. Lascelles to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received January* 15.)

(No. 11.)
My Lord, *Berlin, January* 12, 1900.

WITH reference to Viscount Gough's despatch No. 301 of the 5th ultimo, and to previous correspondence upon the subject of the proposed railway from Konia to Bagdad and Bussorah, I have the honour to report that Major Schlagintweit, who is represented as being an authority on matters concerning Asia Minor, delivered an address at a recent meeting of the Berlin branch of the Colonial Society, in which he depicted the thinly populated and extremely rich Anatolian highlands as a most fruitful field for German agricultural enterprise and colonization. The speaker declared that the difficulties which German settlers would have to encounter would not be insurmountable, granted that certain concessions were made, by the Turkish Government and the land and tenements taxes abolished.

Dr. Georg von Siemens then rose and requested permission to make a few corrections. The Anatolian Railway, he said, is not German but Turkish; it is a Company subject to Turkish rule, although the Director is a native of Stettin, and there are some natives of Berlin on the board. The Bagdad Railway Concession is, he added, by no means assured; and all that has been obtained at present is a sort of pro-concession which authorizes the Society to prospect for the most suitable route and finally to approach the Government with a view to securing permission to construct the line, whilst it is very doubtful if such a line will be able to pay its way from the very start; but, he continued, it was the firm intention of those concerned to carry the project through. The speaker represented the prospects of colonization in a light most unfavourable to would-be settlers, and declared that they would have to contend with ceaseless mistrust on the part of the Turks.

Herr von Siemens is thoroughly competent to speak on this subject as he is closely connected with the financial group that has obtained the recent Concession, and has lately been raised to the nobility by the Emperor on account, it is generally thought, of the active part he took in securing financial support for the undertaking.

The "National Zietung" in publishing the above report, states that although Dr. von Siemens' words are discouraging to those who looked forward to a fresh field for German emigration in Anatolia, the enterprise promises much benefit to many branches of German trade, and work for numerous classes of German mechanics.

I have, &c.
(Signed) FRANK C. LASCELLES.

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No. 9.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received January* 20.)

(No. 5.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, January* 20, 1900.

HER Majesty's Consul at Basra telegraphs reporting the dismissal of the Vali, who has received orders to make over the administration to the Military Commandant, and report himself at Beirout.

Mr. Wratislaw surmises that the dismissal is the result of the machinations of the Nakib of Basra, the Sheikh of Koweit, and the Military Commandant himself.

No reason for the step is given officially.

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## No. 10.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received January* 22.)

(No. 20.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, January* 18, 1900.

MAJOR MAUNSELL'S report on the condition of the Vilayet of Van, which accompanied my despatch No. 587 of the 20th ultimo, contained, as your Lordship will remember, interesting information regarding the Russian influences at work among the Nestorians of the Tiari district—two individuals, the Nestorian priest, Kasha Tuma, and Nimrud, the brother of the Nestorian Patriarch, Mar Shimun, being specially mentioned as active agitators in the Russian interest.

I now have the honour to transmit herewith copies of two further despatches from Major Maunsell on the same subject.

Kasha Tuma, who has for some time past been in Russia, is now reported to have crossed the frontier, and to have reached Tiari, his arrival on Turkish soil being simultaneous with, and not improbably connected with, an affray between Nestorians and Kurds in the neighbourhood, which was attended with some loss of life.

Major Maunsell reports that the expedition to Tiari, contemplated by the Mutessarif of Bashkala (see my despatch No. 513 of the 6th November) in order to collect tribute from the inhabitants, is likely to take place in the spring, and in view of the activity of the Russian Agent, Nimrud, Major Maunsell apprehends that the expedition will lead to bloodshed when the life of Mr. Heazell, a British missionary, established at Tiari, will possibly be in danger, and he suggests that he should be authorized to accompany the Mutessarif's expedition, in order to use his influence to avert disturbances.

I have already drawn the attention of the Grand Vizier to the proceedings of Nimrud and Kasha Tuma, and, as your Lordship will remember, the Porte, who are aware of the Mutessarif's intended expedition, regard Major Maunsell's apprehensions as groundless.

I see certain objections to Major Maunsell's accompanying the Mutessarif in the manner he suggests. Such a proceeding would not improbably be invested in the eyes of the inhabitants with an undue political significance, while in the other quarters it would probably be interpreted as an attempt to obtain political influence which would provoke a more direct interference on the part of the Russians.

I have therefore told Major Maunsell that he should not accompany the Mutessarif's expedition unless he considers Mr. Heazell to be in danger, and that if he goes he should be careful that his journey should not appear to have any political importance.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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### Inclosure 1 in No. 10.

*Major Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 45.)

Sir, *Van, November* 13, 1899.

IN continuation of my despatch No. 40 of the 24th October, I have the honour to report as follows on the Nestorian question.

Regarding the robbery of Mr. Browne's effects by Malik Baboo: three days after I had made representations, the Vali showed me telegrams from Julamerk, stating that the Malik had now apparently repented of his action, and had forwarded the articles on to Tiari. He also made many excuses, and said he had not really meant robbery.

Mr. Heazell is now installed in Lower Tiari for the winter, and Mr. Browne has returned to Kochannes.

Mr. McCoan, an American missionary from Urmia, tells me that Malik Baboo is a notorious robber, and that on two occasions when he has passed through there he has had his baggage detained.

He is also the same man who robbed Colonel Bell in 1886.

I did not think it desirable to press further for any punishment on Malik Baboo by Government, as I knew that the Mutessarif was only desirous of an excuse to introduce troops, and would probably cause serious resistance and disturbance.



I have known that the Mutessarif of Bashkala has for some time been contemplating entering Tiari and adjoining independent districts with a battalion of regular troops for the purpose of arranging and collecting tribute.

This action, unless carried out extremely carefully, is certain to lead to prolonged resistance and bloodshed on the part of the ignorant and half-savage Nestorian mountaineers.

On the 3rd November I got information from a trustworthy source that the Mutessarif intended to start immediately, and knowing that he already had troops in the nearer districts of Diz and Jelu, I thought it possible he might enter Tiari before winter.

I therefore telegraphed to your Excellency to that effect, but I hear now from the Vali that the Mutessarif has definitely returned to Bashkala for the winter.

I do not think he has given up the idea, and will probably make the attempt next spring.

The Mutessarif is one of Zekki Pasha's men, and the policy seems to be that before the arrival of any Russian agents or of any conversion to the Orthodox faith, they must thoroughly impress on the Nestorians the power of the Osmanli Government by marching troops into their districts, and by appointing Kaïmakams in certain places.

If carefully and quietly done, it is possible for such to be carried out without resistance on the part of the tribes.

I would submit that, due notice being given to me when the Mutessarif was about to start, I should be permitted to accompany him to Tiari.

There is great danger, however, if Nimrud be permitted to remain at Kochannes, and intrigue on the Russian side and against Mar Shimun, that there will certainly be armed resistance and bloodshed.

His removal, temporary or otherwise, would have a marked effect on the situation, and our missionaries might then do much to advise the people not to resist any Turkish advance, and keep them quiet.

With Nimrud at hand for intrigue, and in case of disturbance, I should think Mr. Heazell's position in Tiari would become most difficult, and that his life would be in danger.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

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### Inclosure 2 in No. 10.

*Major Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 50.)

Sir, *Van, December* 29, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to report that the Nestorian priest, Kasha Tuma, who is undoubtedly also a Russian agent, has now managed to enter this country and penetrate as far as the Tiari district.

About the 15th November I heard of his having crossed the frontier and having been arrested; but after a short detention he seems to have effected his release by bribing the Mutessarif of Bashkala and various minor officials.

Mr. Browne writes from Kochannes, dated the 3rd December, that Kasha Tuma had been staying there quite openly for the last ten days in Nimrud's house, and had just then left for Tiari in company with a servant of Nimrud.

While there he declaimed loudly against the Russians, but at other places I know he was just as loud in favour of the Orthodox faith as the true one for the Nestorians.

He came with a zaptieh from Diza, in Gavvar, where the Mutessarif was then staying.

I have previously known the Mutessarif of Bashkala as a person who takes bribes, and as one who is seeking to make as much out of the people as possible in order to buy himself a higher post.

The worst instance of this was the extreme amount of tribute he collected from the Christians of Jelu this autumn.

In this case I am sure he is acting quite contrary to the direct orders of the Vali, who has given most stringent instructions that Kasha Tuma was on no account to be

allowed to enter the country, and now that I have informed him of the latter's arrival in Tiari he has taken the matter up strongly again.

The Mutessarif imagines himself quite independent of the Vali, and is at variance with him, while last spring he was intriguing to become Vali of Van himself.

On the 17th December I received a telegram from Mr. Browne giving news of a raid by some Nestorians of Tiari on the Moslem villages of Lewin, a valley situated just north of Tiari, and I could confirm the news officially here.

It seems there is a quarrel between Malik Ismail, the principal Nestorian Chief of Tiari, and Tajir Agha, the Kurd Chief of Lewin, regarding the theft of some sheep during the summer.

Malik Ismail thought the occasion suitable to attack Tajir Agha with a force, variously estimated at about 200 armed Nestorians, with a view of recovering the sheep and pillaging Lewin, probably also in revenge for the attack on the Nestorian villages of Lewin by the Hartoshi Kurds in the autumn of 1898.

Tajir Agha sent in to Julamerk for troops to help, and twenty regular infantry (according to the account of the affair given me by the Military Commandant here) arrived, and quickly drove off the Nestorians when they appeared, killing three, and bringing several wounded and prisoners into Julamerk.

I have often urged on our missionaries to advise, through Mar Shimun, the Tiari people to discontinue these raids, but they have apparently done so without effect.

Such attacks are obviously the wildest folly on the part of the Nestorians, and only supply an excuse to the Turkish Government to step in and extinguish any remaining independence they possess.

Mr. Heazell, one of our missionaries, is in Tiari, not with Malik Ismail, but with Malik Berghu, another Chief more to the south.

I have no direct evidence to connect Kasha Tuma with this disturbance, but as he left Kochannes about the 3rd December, he must have arrived at Malik Ismail's before the raid took place.

It is, I think, clear, from his having stayed in Nimrud's house while in Kochannes, that the latter is also implicated in Russian intrigues.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

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No. 11.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received January* 29.)

(No. 28.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January* 24, 1900.

WITH reference to Mr. de Bunsen's despatch No. 364 of the 21st June, 1898, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting the arrest and imprisonment of Emin Pasha, the notorious brigand and officer of Hamidie cavalry.

It appears from Major Maunsell's Report, that there was no truth in the rumour of a second raid mentioned by him in his despatch No. 19 of the 22nd ultimo, forwarded to your Lordship in my despatch No. 13 of the 9th instant, in which twenty-one Armenian revolutionists were said to have crossed from Persia to the north of the Abagha Plain.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure in No. 11.

*Major Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 1.)
Sir, *Van, January* 6, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to report that Emin Pasha, the celebrated Hamidie brigand, has been brought in here, and is now in Van prison.

He lives actually in the Erzeroum Vilayet, but close to the frontier of the Adeljivas Kaza of this province, and has this summer been committing many depredations in his own country, and has been in a state of constant war with neighbouring tribes.



A short time ago he had the temerity to pillage a confidential servant of the Vali here on his return from Constantinople.

The Vali was naturally furious, and sent immediate orders to have him brought in here as a prisoner, the result being he was seized, and arrived with an officer and twenty regular cavalry two days ago, and is now lodged in the prison.

The Vali tells me he intends to have him tried on several charges which the Ministry of Justice at Constantinople had previously preferred against him. As he is a Colonel of a Hamidie regiment a question with Zekki Pasha is sure to arise, although up to the present nothing has been said.

Your Excellency will remember that in the spring a very similar case occurred as regards Sheref Bey, who ultimately escaped trial.

At the same time, I have noticed from many indications at various times throughout the last year that Zekki Pasha seems far more inclined than formerly to introduce a much stricter discipline among the Hamidie, and to check the almost unbounded licence to commit crime they used to possess.

Husni Pasha, the Commandant, and practically Zekki Pasha's agent here, has greatly assisted him in this; while Munir Pasha, the former Divisional Commander for a number of years, was far too lenient in every way.

Hussein Pasha has been very quiet this year, as also Mustapha Pasha, the nomad Chief of the Milan, south of the lake.

The Vali, too, has in many instances been permitted to exercise his proper authority over Hamidie when they have committed crimes and raids.

A missionary party of one English and one American lady arrived here on the 1st instant, after many difficulties placed in their way by the Vali of Erzeroum up to the very frontier of the Van Vilayet, but they were not further molested after passing that point.

Their accounts further confirm my despatch No. 19 of the 22nd December as regards the effect of the Vali's prompt action recently at Arjish in quelling what might have developed into a serious massacre.

The accounts of a further engagement in which twenty-one revolutionists were killed have turned out to be untrue.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

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No. 12.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received January* 29.)

(No. 29.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January* 24, 1900.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 5 of the 20th instant, I have the honour to report that Mohsin Pasha, General of Division, has been appointed Vali of Basra in the place of Hamdi Pasha.

I have so far been unable to ascertain any particulars with regard to the new Vali's antecedents or character.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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No. 13.

*The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 21.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, January* 30, 1900.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 20 of the 18th instant relative to Major Maunsell's proposal to accompany the Mutessarif of Bashkala on an expedition into the Tiari district.

I approve the instructions given by you to Major Maunsell for his guidance in this matter.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

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## No. 14.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received February* 5.)

(No. 40. Confidential.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, January* 31, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to report that the Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me, confidentially, on the 29th instant that the Russian Ambassador had been complaining to him of the injury inflicted on Russian political interests and commerce in the Persian Gulf by the concession of the Bagdad–Basra Railway to Germany. It showed, he had said, a mistrust of Russia which was surprising in view of the friendly relations between the two Governments, and although he had not come to protest against the German concession, his Government felt that compensation was due to them in one form or another. Such compensation would be found if the Sultan granted them the privilege of constructing a railway to Erzeroum in connection with the line from Kars, or if not to Erzeroum to some other point to be determined later on. M. Zinovieff added that very probably the railway would not be made for a very long time, but that the grant of preferential rights of railway construction in that part of Turkey would be a set-off to the concession made to Germany, and would be considered by his Government as a proof of the friendly feelings with which the Sultan was animated towards them.

Tewfik Pasha said that he had replied to the Ambassador that he did not see how Russian interests were affected by the Bagdad–Basra Railway concession, as Russia had very little trade or commerce in the Persian Gulf, and such as they were he did not think they would be injured by the railway. As regarded the request for preferential rights of railway construction in the region in question, he certainly did not think it in the interest of the Ottoman Empire to allow the Russians to construct a railway across the frontier which would give them easy access to the military fortifications in those parts, and he was sorry to say that he could hold out no hope of compliance with his Excellency's request.

Tewfik Pasha then went on to say that the Ambassador was not at all pleased with this answer, and that he understood the matter was being pressed at the Palace. The Sultan had, he said, consulted him, and he had most strongly deprecated any sort of promise or concession of the kind. His Majesty entirely shared his views and seemed determined to refuse, but he feared that the ultimate result depended in great measure upon the persistence of the Russian Government.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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## No. 15.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received February* 19.)

(No. 54. Confidential.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, February* 14, 1900.

SINCE writing my despatch No. 40, Confidential, of the 31st instant, respecting Russian demands for Railway Concessions in Northern Asia Minor, I have the honour to report further information on this question, which was communicated to me by the Minister for Foreign Affairs at his weekly reception on the 12th instant.

Tewfik Pasha began by saying that since he had last spoken to me the Russian proposals had been considered by the Council of Ministers under orders from the Sultan, which the Ministers regarded as equivalent to an Imperial command to agree to the demands of the Russian Ambassador.

At this Council, which was held on the 7th instant, the Ministers decided to report that "the Ottoman Government will build the railway themselves, but that if a Concession were granted to a 'Société Anonyme,' Russian capitalists shall have preferential rights."

The Ministers, his Excellency went on to say, came to this decision very reluctantly, but they were forced to it by M. Zinovieff threatening that, if his demands were refused, Russia would take such measures as she thought fit and proper to protect her rights and interests.



## No. 14*.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received February* 12.)

(No. 45.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, February* 8, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Aleppo, reporting the arrest and imprisonment on a baseless charge of treason of Archbishop Muggherditch, the head of the Anglo-Armenian Church at Aintab.

On first hearing, by telegraph, from Mr. Barnham of the Archbishop's arrest, I made unofficial representations on his behalf to the Ministers of the Interior and Justice, and I am happy to be able to report that he has now been liberated on bail.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure in No. 14*.

*Consul Barnham to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 4.)

Sir, *Aleppo, January* 22, 1900.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 2 of the 21st instant reporting the arrest of Muggerditch Effendi, Archbishop of the Anglo-Armenian Church in Aintab, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that the cause of his arrest appears to be as follows:—

In 1898 the Archbishop went to England with the object of collecting money for the building of his church, and returned here in the winter of that year.

On landing at Alexandretta, certain papers which were found in his luggage were seized at the custom-house, and handed over to the Censor.

A letter which I have received from his wife since his arrest informs me that these papers comprised an autobiography written in English 33 years ago, a pamphlet by a friend in England, written with the object of interesting the charitable in his work at Aintab, and some letters from friends in England.

It is not clear whether the autobiography is in manuscript or print, but it is not signed by the Archbishop, nor does any paper which has been seized bear his signature. This one, however, appears to be the chief count in the accusation, because it contains the following statement—perfectly harmless in the minds of all sensible people—"I was born in the town of Sis, once the capital of the Armenians."

Bearing no date, the Government assumes that it was written recently, whereas it is 33 years old. This being so, whatever its contents, they have been condoned by Imperial amnesty over and over again. The pamphlet I believe to have been written many years ago by Canon Tristram, of Durham.

I have been endeavouring to obtain the recovery of these papers ever since the Archbishop returned. I could not demand them officially, because my instructions forbid it, and as the Archbishop never alluded to the papers as if they could compromise him, I did not attach great importance to the matter.

I mentioned it to the Vali, who gave me a distinct promise that the papers should be restored; but as time passed without result I sent Mr. Falanga, and later on the Dragoman, to make inquiries. I was informed that the papers had been sent to the Kaïmakam of Aintab to be handed over to the Archbishop, but the latter wrote to say that he could not obtain them. I then wrote privately to the Kaïmakam, who replied that they had been sent back to Aleppo, and again, later on, I heard that they had been sent to Constantinople.

About two weeks ago the Archbishop wrote to tell me that he had been subjected to an examination by the Juge d'Instruction, who put to him three questions: (1) why he joined the Church of England; (2) why he corresponded with people in England; (3) why he prompted Turkish subjects to seek British protection; and his answer was that he corresponded with people in England because they belonged to the same communion, while he indignantly protested against the insinuation that he had prompted Ottoman subjects to seek British protection.

I, Sir, have known the Archbishop for 20 years, and like many others in England and in Syria have learnt to respect him for his blameless life, and I have never known

him or his people apply to the Consulate for protection against the local authorities. He is a very old man, long past 80, and very feeble, his health failing steadily since he had a stroke of paralysis in England two years ago, and he is now, at the coldest time of the year, lodged in Aintab Gaol.

On hearing of the Archbishop's arrest I at once applied to the Vali, who expressed regret that he could not intervene, as the matter was now in the hands of the Tribunals. I then telegraphed to your Excellency.

This morning I sent to the Public Prosecutor, who informed me that all papers relating to the case would arrive from Aintab to-morrow, when the matter would go before the Heyyeti-Ittihamié (Chamber of Accusations). This Court will either quash the proceedings or bring in a true bill.

I then went to the Vali, and we had a long conversation which left me hopeful of good results.

I told his Excellency that I thought he might have prevented this prosecution if he had ordered the papers to be given back when I first applied to him, but he assured me that, from a sincere conviction that the Archbishop was innocent, he had done everything that was possible to protect him: and he explained that the reason why he had been unable to order the return of the papers was that Hilmy Effendi, Police Commissary at the Passport Office in Alexandretta, had reported the matter direct to Constantinople, with a note that the Archbishop had gone to England without permission. That is to say, like other Armenians, who left for England and America after the massacres, the Archbishop found that his only chance of going was to apply for a Turkish passport for Beyrout, and, instead of landing there, to proceed on the same boat to Alexandria, where no questions would be asked, and there re-embark for Europe.

I told the Vali that, although I quite understood that he could not act officially, I was sure he could help me directly the papers arrived from Aintab by pressing his view of the matter upon the Public Prosecutor and the President of the Chamber of Accusations, and he promised to do so, and bade me hope that the charge would be dismissed.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HENRY D. BARNHAM.



Upon the decision of the Council of Ministers being communicated to the Russian Embassy, M. Zinovieff demurred. He refused to accept it as either satisfactory or sufficient, and insisted upon the Ottoman Government undertaking not to construct any railways adjoining the Russian frontier, or in "le bassin de la Mer Noire," without previously consulting the Russian Government; and, secondly, that the Ottoman Government should promise only to grant the right of railway construction in those parts to a Russian Company.

Speaking, he said, in confidence, Tewfik Pasha expressed his fears that the Sultan would not have the courage to resist the pressure of the Russian Embassy. Being fully aware of the Sultan's weakness in regard to revolutionists and Radicals of all descriptions, M. Zinovieff was working on his feelings by veiled threats of insisting upon the return of the Armenian refugees from the Caucasus, and by describing the dangerous situation that would be immediately created in Macedonia if the Russian Government let it be known for a moment that they were no longer interested in the revolutionary movements in the Balkan peninsula. He supported these threats by preparing notes to be sent to the Sublime Porte respecting the condition of affairs both in Asia Minor, bordering on the Russian frontier, and in Macedonia. At the same time, he tried to make concession as easy as possible to the Sultan by saying that he did not want the engagements taken to be recorded by a Convention, but that an Iradé, confirmed by a note from the Sublime Porte, would be quite sufficient.

Tewfik Pasha seemed aware of the remarkable resemblance between Russian proceedings in this question and her action under no very dissimilar circumstances in China; but he said that the Ministers were powerless, and that the matter rested entirely in the hands of the Sultan.

Upon my inquiring what attitude the German Ambassador took in respect to the Russian demands, Tewfik Pasha replied that he gave them no support, and was unwilling to interfere in any way.

From a conversation I had with Baron von Marschall the next day, I gathered that his attitude was as described by Tewfik Pasha, and that he appeared more vexed at the way in which the Russian Embassy were presenting their demands than at the demands themselves—no doubt objecting to their being put forward as compensation due for the Concession of the Bagdad Railway to German capitalists.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 16.

*The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 29.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, February* 19, 1900.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 45 of the 8th instant reporting the arrest and subsequent liberation of Archbishop Muggherditch, the head of the Anglo-Armenian Church at Aintab.

I have learned with satisfaction the successful result of your representations to the Turkish Ministers of the Interior and of Justice on behalf of the Archbishop.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 17.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received February* 26.)

(No. 57.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, February* 19, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Trebizond, containing an annual Report on the Vilayet of Trebizond.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 17.

*Consul Longworth to Sir N. O'Conor.*

*Trebizond, February* 1, 1900.

Sir,

I WOULD venture to review here, from official and private data alike, the general condition of the Trebizond Vilayet in 1899.

The Report is intended to be the second of the new annual series, which, by that of the 15th February 1899, is linked to those preceding the disturbances of 1895. Any subject already dealt with elsewhere shall, for brevity, be alluded to merely, with, however, a numbered reference to the despatch containing the information in greater detail.

The year 1899 marked a very perceptible improvement in the administrative affairs of the province.

There was less abuse of power, corruption was not so prevalent, and routine work was carried out with greater regularity. The authorities, so far as left unfettered by superior orders, displayed on the whole much moderation and judgment in their dealings with the public. They began perhaps to realize at last that the Government was for the people, and not the people for the Government.

This is, to say the least, a long step forward. Whether it was taken from choice or through fear of the Vali is the question. The benefit of the doubt might well be allowed them, for Cadri Bey is not unkind by nature, nor is he very severe towards his subordinates. Be this as it may, it was his public-spirited example that was more generally followed, whether it tallied or not with that set by the party in power at Constantinople. His Excellency has doubtless great moral influence, which enables him to lead rather than to drive those placed under his orders. From the highest functionary to the lowest official his personality is felt to be very much in evidence, and this secures him the implicit confidence and obedience of the honest, who are happily in the majority, with, of course, the people at their back. Being no respecter of persons, Cadri Bey's enemies, though few, are influential. One of them is Osman Effendi Lemlizadeh, and his coadjutor, the disreputable lawyer, Yonous Effendi, ex-Nazir of the Régie. It is satisfactory to note that, notwithstanding their command of money, their machinations at Constantinople failed. They would have succeeded perhaps in having his Excellency recalled had they not made their plot too public by buying at 1*l.* each the signatures of some fifty Laz residents of the capital to certain charges framed against him for the edification of His Majesty the Sultan.

Ready as Cadri Bey is to overlook an error or pardon a fault, especially if the offender pleads ignorance, those of doubtful integrity, when caught slipping, fare badly at his hands. Two instances in proof of this deserve notice. The first is that of Lutfi Effendi, a Palace nominee, who lost in June the Kaïmakamlik of Kerassond, to obtain, however, through patronage, the more lucrative post of Bergamo, in the Smyrna Vilayet.* The second is that of Djemal Bey, who, found corrupt and inefficient, had to quit Gumushaneh in December, and accept instead the Mutessariflik of Dersim, in the Erzeroum Vilayet. These facts, besides the death in July of the Trebizond Mouavin, Roumi Effendi, and the dismissal by the Porte of the Doroul and Kélkit Kaïmakams, necessitate the following alterations in the list of Governor furnished in my Report of the 15th February, 1899:—

1. Trebizond Christian Governor, not yet named.

2. Gumushaneh Mutessarif, Ibrahim Bey, age 45, born at Constantinople, appointed in December; intelligent, but not prepossessing.

3. Kerassond Kaïmakam, Zia Bey, age 40, born at Constantinople; last post Aïvadjik; appointed in August; weak, but honest.

4. Doroul Kaïmakam, Sabri Effendi, age 35, born at Constantinople; appointed in September; last post and character unknown.

5. Kélkit Kaïmakam, Tahsin Effendi, age 10, born at Adrianople; appointed in July; last post and character not known.

In surveying the status of a Turkish province attention is almost invariably drawn to a lack of public security. I would at once state that in this respect and in this vilayet, the year began, continued, and ended well.

Seven brigand chiefs were at large, and now there are none. They all hailed from that hot-bed of bandits, the woody district of Ordou, which is now as little infested as the hills of Trebizond.

* See despatch of June 15, 1899.



In other words, brigandage as a profession is extinct. Aziz and Osman were captured, Mehdi, Mehmet and Mahmoud were killed, the latter losing his life in attempting to rescue his mistress, and lastly but not leastly, Emrullah and Keusseh-Mehmed, the most notorious of all, disbanded their men and escaped to Batoum.

There is no Extradition Treaty between the two countries, and there they were left unmolested with their ill-gotten gains, until the Vali claimed them, persistently and diplomatically enough, on the principle of reciprocity.

Pursued by the Russian militia they surrendered, to find themselves eventually, at the end of March, in a Turkish jail.

For this neighbourly act of amity M. Alexandrowitch, the Prefect, and Colonel Iwanowitch, the Commandant of Batoum, received respectively the 2nd class Medjidieh and the 3rd class Osmanieh.

Such distinctions could not have been more aptly bestowed, for, by the extradition of the sturdy and wily brigands, a signal service was rendered to public security. The effect it had on others of a predatory disposition was most salutary. It made them turn their thoughts to honester pursuits, under the conviction that the arm of the law could reach them not only within but beyond the Empire.

As for the inhabitants, they soon developed a sense of security which led them to neglect the ordinary precautions usually taken against thieves and burglars. Many slept with their doors unlocked, and many, in isolated localities, dispensed with even a watch-dog, and yet few were the cases of robbery.

The most notable was that perpetrated in March on three Englishmen at the Aghalik Mines, near Tireboli. Surprised in their sleep and overpowered they were plundered of their effects to the value of 75*l.*, of which 82 per cent. had since been made good to them by the imposition of a fine on the surrounding villagers.*

The acts of murder brought to my knowledge were as follows:—

A widow's infant, killed by her Georgian paramour, near Ordou; a Laz shot by a Laz in a mosque at Rizeh; an Armenian strangled to death by Turks near Trebizond; and, lastly, the assassination of Osman, Mr. Pisani's messenger, by a co-religionist in the Kerassond district.

A word of praise is due to the guardians of the peace, among a population, fixed and floating, of nearly 1,250,000. The vigilance of the police, 65 in number (three Christians) and the activity of the gendarmes, 1,191 all told (42 Christians), converted this area of almost 12,400 square miles into a model of safety to life and property.

Three zaptiehs lost their lives in skirmishes with brigands. Those rewarded for their zeal or bravery number 34, of which 27 were promoted (3 to Lieutenantship) and 7 received decorations (2 the 4th class Medjidieh, 3 the 5th class, and 2 salvage medals),

Their services to the State will be best understood from the following figures:—

The robbers killed in 1899 are given as 4 in the Trebizond, 3 in the Samsoun, and 2 in the Rizeh districts; and those captured as 19 im the Trebizond, 11 in the Samsoun, 8 in the Rizeh, and 3 in the Gumushaneh districts; while those who surrendered themselves without compulsion number 5 in the Trebizond, 2 in the Samsoun, 2 in the Gumushaneh, and 1 in the Rizeh districts, making a total of 9, 41, and 10 respectively.

The military had for once little to do with the maintenance of public peace and order. Morally the troops were of some value, but physically their assistance was confined to patrolling the streets of garrisoned towns in small detachments led by gendarmes. No reservists (Redif) were kept under arms, nor was any portion of the newly-enrolled territorial auxiliaries (Ilaveh) called out for drill.‡

The troops with the colours were the 1st and 3rd battalions of the 27th Regiment of the 7th brigade of the standing army (Nizam) each about 500 strong.

While the whole of the first is here, the other has one company at Rizeh and three at Khoppa. There are besides some 600 gunners (Topchi) of which 200 are at Trebizond, as well as some 600 standing army reservists (Ihtiat) stationed in half-companies at Uniah and Tireboli, and in full companies at Samsoum, Charshambah, Kerassond, Ordou and Gumushaneh, charged with safeguarding the more or less crumbled forts, and the more or less empty depôts.

The soldiers conducted themselves admirably. It is no exaggeration to say so.

* See despatches of August 16, September 11, and October 20, 1899.
† See despatch of July 26, 1899.
‡ See despatch of September 25, 1899.

Poorly clad and badly paid, with all the vigour of being well-fed, the imputations against them, if any, were trivial, be it from man, woman, or child. That they should have been held in such thorough discipline does much credit to Sami Pasha, the Brigadier-General, acting for some time Divisional Commandant, who, it will be remembered as Lieutenant-Colonel of the Staff, distinguished himself highly in the Greco-Turkish war.*

The judiciary in Turkey has changed lately decidedly for the better under the statesmanship of Abdul Rahman Pasha. The officials now selected, if not more able, are at least more honest, and consequently the dispensation of justice with an even hand is fast becoming a distinguishable feature. Proceedings in law-suits, however, are still too often unduly protracted to the annoyance and despair of litigants, irrespective of class, religion, or nationality. The sentences of imprisonment in 1899 passed by the Trebizond Criminal Courts figure as 16 to one year (6 for theft and 10 for assault), 35 to five years (15 for battery and 20 for rape and abduction), 20 to ten years for either brigandage or vendetta, and 10 to fifteen years, all for murder. Most of them were outstanding cases, of which there still remained awaiting conviction 56 for murder, 5 for rape, and 61 for minor felonious acts. Apart from the offenders banished, given as 22, those incarcerated here, at the central prison of the vilayet, numbered, late in December, 16 Christians and 217 Moslems.

The economic condition was perhaps less desperate in this than in most of the other provinces. Retrospectively and prospectively, however, here as elsewhere, a radical change of policy is a crying necessity. Hindrances to intercourse, vexatious impediments to trade, death-dealing monopolies, &c., unless done away with, will inevitably lodge the country into bankruptcy. Some local efforts to curtail expenditure were made with not altogether negative results. Pertef Pasha, for instance, a notability of the place and Chairman of the Public Works Commission, was in August deprived of his £ T. 20 monthly pay, and left to fulfil the functions gratuitously. Similar steps were taken in two or three other Departments, but such retrenchments can scarcely be termed fiscal measures of any importance. The people, on the other hand, appeared to have had a little more money, and they were ready enough to part with some of it for charitable purposes. In illustration of this may be mentioned the fact that Cadri Bey, through his sheer popularity, succeeded in raising no less than £ T. 4,000 in aid of the victims of the Aïdin earthquakes. And yet business was slack. How can it ever be brisk under the existing Police and Customs Regulations, several of which are obstructions—puerile in the extreme. Tin soldiers, for instance, were seized lest they should engender among the inhabitants a militant spirit; linings of iron safes were slit open in search of contraband articles, and a terrestrial globe in transit to the Shah of Persia was detained for indicating thereon the whereabouts of Armenia. That luckless word "Armenia" is a veritable bugbear of the Turkish official mind. I once had to save a wall map with it on, belonging to a British subject. "Confiscate it," was my message, "but confiscate first the bills and papers of a certain packet-steamer." The map was rescued, but atlas mutilated. The obnoxious word was there, letter by letter, neatly cut out and more glaring than ever against a white surface.

The Ottoman financial year ends on the 1st (14th) March, and the Budget therefore, for the greater part of 1899, is incomplete. The following are the items of the one preceding, namely, for the year 1314 (1898–99):—

*Revenue.*—Land tax, £ T. 78,900; trade licences, £ T. 6,110; military exemption tax, £ T. 43,430; sheep tax, £ T. 33,010; tithes, £ T. 141,350; mines and forests, £ T. 3,966; title-deeds and transfers, £ T. 4,410; income from State lands, £ T. 150; judicial fees and fines, £ T. 4,540; public instruction, £ T. 4,700; public works, £ T. 6,000; and sundries, £ T. 3,000, making up a total of £ T. 329,560, against £ T. 334,515 in 1897–98.

*Expenditure.*—Magistracy, £ T. 12,630; Civil Service, £ T. 39,785; army, £ T. 36,900; navy, £ T. 8,000; gendarmerie, £ T. 22,385; police, £ T. 2,135; Sultan's Civil List, £ T. 7,250; and assignments (Palace and other Hevalehs), £ T. 200,475.

The political situation was not what it should have been. In the earlier months Russia endeavoured to rid the Caucasus of not only Moslem vagrants, but Armenian refugees. Finding Turkey, however, reluctant to take them back, she, humanely enough, abandoned the scheme. The rumour at the time was to the effect that the Porte suspected her object to be the introduction into Turkey of Russian Armenians with the sinister intent of fomenting trouble. Be this as it may, [most binding orders were in July transmitted to the Vali to admit no Armenians from the Caucasus. Later on, in

* See despatch of July 2, 1898.



November, the injunction was supplemented by an equally stringent command to stop the egress as well as the ingress of all Armenians.

The orders received here were evidently also sent to the inland provincial authorities. Batches, nevertheless, of these people arrived from the interior and from abroad. Many of them were respectable merchants. A great number were poverty-stricken wretches. Forbidden to go on or to go back, they found themselves virtually in all the predicament of a blockade. About 150 had to be fed at Government expense to prevent their starving to death.

What is most curious in this connection is the Sultan's telegram to the Vali asking him what he meant by hindering the Armenians from travelling freely. This was in December, and though his Excellency's reply was appropriate enough, no rejoinder has as yet been vouchsafed to him by His Majesty.

The present improved relations existing between the Executive and the public deserve a little special notice. Without giving any undue importance to the fact, it may perhaps be regarded as rather significant of the times. High and low, the Rulers and the ruled, appear to have had enough of despotism.

A vast majority are evidently beginning to long for more liberty and equality, for a free press and a Constitutional Government, aspirations which, I understand, are also entertained very generally in the metropolis, and are not, therefore, exclusively provincial. The comments on the two topics now absorbing attention are to some extent indicative of these sentiments. The one is the war in South Africa, which, as was to be expected from the hearty reception accorded here in September to Her Majesty's ship "Melita,"* is enlisting for us—as champions of free institutions—the friendliest good wishes and the utmost sympathy. The other is Mahmoud Pasha's flight to Europe, a subject discussed in privacy by only the educated classes. It has aroused in them no little interest and some hope. Will he be able to force Abdul Hamid to mend his ways is the question asked. The pessimists say no, the optimists say yes, but the devout say nothing. There is still a large number of the latter category who, with pious but gloomy thoughts, are apt to regard their national calamities as tokens of divine wrath. The remark holds good for the Mussulmans. The Christians think little of their backsliding generation, and blend freely religion with politics. This may be one of the reasons why the State eyes them with suspicion, and yet the most dangerous of all—those whose forefathers had for centuries disguised their true faith with infinite subtlety, are claimed as soldiers.†

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. Z. LONGWORTH.

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No. 18.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received March* 6.)

(No. 63.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, February* 28, 1900.

I RECEIVED on the 18th instant a telegram from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Beirut, informing me that the sons of the British Vice-Consul at Sidon had been insulted and attacked in the streets, but that the police had interfered and protected them to their home and dispersed the crowd. Also, that the Vali had sent a body of gendarmes under a colonel to inquire into the matter and seize the offenders.

On the 23rd instant Mr. Drummond-Hay again telegraphed to say that false charges of blasphemy, which is apparently a common and dangerous proceeding in such cases, had been preferred against British subjects, and that the attitude of the Sub-Governor was not satisfactory. Mr. Drummond-Hay therefore suggested that Her Majesty's ship "Isis," which was expected at Beirut on the 25th, should visit Sidon.

I replied that as the Vali seemed disposed to take all necessary measures to maintain order and punish the offenders, I did not think it would be expedient for a British ship of war to go to Sidon if it were likely, under the circumstances, to be interpreted in an unfriendly sense by the Ottoman Government, but that if the visit appeared as a part of the ship's cruise, I saw no objection provided the Admiral approved.

Yesterday I caused the matter to be mentioned to the Sublime Porte, and at the same time requested that stringent orders should be sent to the Sub-Governor of Sidon

* See despatch of September 23, 1899.
† See despatch of December 14, 1899.

to prevent charges of blasphemy being trumped up against British subjects, and to see that the guilty parties were properly punished.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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No. 19.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received March* 6.)

(No. 66.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March* 1, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 28 of the 24th January last, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting on recent events in Arjish, which tend to show that better discipline is being maintained among the Hamidié officers.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure in No. 19.

*Major Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 5.)
Sir, *Van, January* 3, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to report that in continuation of my despatch No. 1 of the 6th January, Emin Pasha is not considered as a Hamidié officer.

He wished to raise a regiment, but his offer was not finally accepted.

However, he came in here in the uniform of a Hamidié Colonel; but his badges of rank, &c., were ordered to be removed, and he is now in the common prison.

It now appears that, in addition to plundering goods from the Vali of Van's servant, he stripped a number of reserve soldiers going to their homes from Van through his country.

For this he has incurred the resentment of Husni Pasha, the Commandant here, as well; and there seems little chance now of his being liberated from prison.

A short time ago a murder was committed by a Kurd of Hussein Pasha's tribe on an Armenian in a neighbouring village. Hussein Pasha endeavoured to protect his man, but by the Vali's orders, the Kaïmakam of Adeljivas sent a trustworthy officer with some soldiers to capture him.

This they did after a certain struggle, and he is now in Adeljivas prison. With Hussein Pasha is a ruffianly Armenian named Marko, formerly Headman in one of the villages there, but who now acts as Hussein's agent among the Armenians, and furthers his various plans and intrigues against the Christians. The Vali sent orders for this man to be captured, but he fled, and in a struggle to seize him, a Kurd was severely wounded.

The Armenian is now hiding in one of Hussein Pasha's villages, either in the Bitlis or Erzeroum vilayets; but the Vali tells me he hopes soon to be able to capture him.

Hussein Pasha wrote to Zekki Pasha immediately a long series of complaints, much exaggerated, regarding the above events.

He said one of his villages had been pillaged by troops, fifty women and children turned out in the snow, some Kurds killed, and so on. Zekki Pasha referred the matter to Husni Pasha here, who could, of course, assure of the facts of the case, and Hussein Pasha has gained nothing whatever by his appeal to Erzinghian.

All this will have a considerable effect in insuring security and tranquillity to the Christian population round Arjish. In many ways it is evident that Zekki Pasha is dealing much more severely with Hamidié officers who have a bad record, and intends to bring them more under discipline.

Sheref Bey, a notorious Hamidié Colonel, who escaped trial in the spring, has since been very quiet, and must have been severely warned by Zekki Pasha.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

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No. 20.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received March* 6.)

(No. 68. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March* 1, 1900.

IN continuation of my despatch No. 54, Confidential, of the 14th ultimo, I have the honour to report that the Russian Ambassador had a prolonged audience with the Sultan last Friday in reference to the demands which, in accordance with orders from his Government, he had made in respect to railways in Northern Asia Minor. During the audience the Minister for Foreign Affairs was hastily summoned to the Palace, but as far as I learn, the Sultan managed to defer coming to any final decision.

As your Lordship is aware, the Russian demands are twofold:—

1. That if the Imperial Ottoman Government themselves desire to construct any railways in the neighbourhood of the Black Sea, the Russian Government must be previously consulted, and only Turkish capital employed; and

2. That if they are constructed by a Company, none but an exclusively Russian Company shall be given the Concession.

On the following day the Turkish Ambassador in St. Petersburgh was instructed to do everything in his power to persuade the Russian Government to agree to a decision of the Council of Ministers to the following effect:—

"The Imperial Ottoman Government reserves to itself complete liberty of action to make when it thinks fit a railway in the neighbourhood of the Black Sea. If the Imperial Government does not construct this line, but decides to concede the right of construction to a foreign Company, which shall be formed into a 'Société Anonyme Ottomane,' it will give the Concession to Russian capitalists, who will form an Ottoman Company on the same conditions as are laid down by the Decree of the 12th (24th) December for the Anatolian Railway Company in regard to the Bagdad Railway. It is at the same time to be understood that the section from Ada Bazar to Heraclea, as also the other sections of this line which have been already granted to the Anatolian Railway Company, shall naturally be excepted."

In answer to this communication, Count Mouravieff replied that he had been acquainted for the last ten days with the decision of the Council of Ministers, and that it was precisely on this account that M. Zinovieff had been instructed to lay his demands personally before the Sultan.

A further Council of Ministers was held at the Palace on Monday, the 25th, but apparently the only decision taken was—and this was merely submitted to the Sultan—that the Anatolian Railway Company should be requested to construct a railway from Angora to Sivas. Up to the present moment, however, no proposal of the kind has been made to the German Ambassador, and his Excellency informs me that they have already a right to construct a line from Angora to Diarbekir viâ Sivas and Kharput, but that they preferred the more southern route from Konia as the less expensive and more profitable.

I have also learnt, but I have not as yet been able to confirm, the information which reaches me from the Persian Ambassador, that M. Zinovieff has entered a protest against a possible extension of the Bagdad Railway to Hannikin.

No demand has so far been made by the Germans for this section, nor do I think it likely they will at the present moment prefer a request which would certainly encounter serious opposition from the Russian Embassy.

The commercial as well as political importance of the present demands of the Russian Government, which are virtually an absolute monopoly of all railway construction in the rich high table-lands of Northern Asia Minor is so obvious that I need not dwell upon this point. It is, under the circumstances, tantamount to a recognition not only of the predominance, but in a certain measure of the quasi-Protectorate of those regions.

The German Ambassador does not in conversation conceal his vexation at the arbitrary and dictatorial way in which the Russian Government is pressing demands which are calculated to keep a great part of this Empire closed to any real material development until such time as the Russians are ready to develop it for their own benefit, while, in the meantime, official corruption and misgovernment and the miserable hardships inflicted on a great part of the population will prepare them for any change which promises a more lenient and orderly system of government, and a release from the burthens which so many of the present Turkish officials are called upon to impose upon

the people. It particularly annoys Baron von Marshall that the Russian Ambassador should characterize his demands as a "moral compensation" for the Concession of the Bagdad Railway.

The Ottoman Government has not so far, however, made any appeal to the German Ambassador for his assistance, nor do I suppose it is likely to be entertained if they do, and he informs me confidentially that he has up to the present moment received no instructions whatever from his Government on the subject.

I am assured by one of the Ministers who has been consulted that what is influencing the Sultan most in all this matter and inclining him to agree to the Russian demands is the threat that, if he refuses, the Armenian refugees will inevitably be sent back from the Caucasus. His Majesty attaches, according to the Minister, more importance to this threat from its imaginary personal danger than to the country's interests which will be sacrificed. How far His Imperial Majesty may be held back from yielding by his fear of putting such an arm as is given by this Concession into the hands of the "Mahmoud Pashas" and the "Young Turk" party, it is difficult to say, but I should imagine that when it is known and understood it will aggravate still more, if possible, his unpopularity, which is already such a dangerous element in the existing very precarious political situation.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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No. 21.

*Mr. Milbanke to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received March* 6.)

(No. 53. Confidential.)
*Vienna, March* 2, 1900.

My Lord,

DURING a short conversation which I had yesterday with Count Széesen at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, his Excellency alluded to the Russian designs in Asia Minor as shown by the demands recently put forward at Constantinople for a guarantee that Russia should have the priority in regard to any further railway concession to be granted by the Turkish Government.

Count Széesen told me that the reports received from the Austrian Ambassador to the Porte represented the Sultan as being much upset, not to say alarmed, by the somewhat brutal manner, as he expressed it, in which the Russian demands had been made, and insinuated that, if the procedure of the Government of St. Petersburgh on this occasion should have the effect of detaching Turkey in any way from the influence of Russia, such a result would be viewed with great satisfaction at Vienna.

M. de Kállay, in my recent conversation with him, also alluded to the railway projects of Russia in Asia Minor as a matter of serious importance to British interests, and expressed his opinion that the Russian Government would hardly have ventured to put forward such pretensions at the present moment if they had not thought that Great Britain was too much occupied by the war in South Africa to offer any serious objection.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RALPH MILBANKE.

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No. 22.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received March* 12.)

(No. 75. Confidential.)
*Constantinople, March* 7, 1900.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship a copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum on the subject of a threatened secession of Armenians to the Russian Church, and on the action taken by the Russian Consulate in the matter.

The danger to Turkey is a very serious one, and I have on several occasions during the last eighteen months drawn the attention of the Grand Vizier and of the Minister for Foreign Affairs to it as almost the inevitable consequence of making the lives of the Armenians intolerable through the tyranny of the Hamidieh troops on the



one side, and the exactions of the civil authorities on the other. The Grand Vizier raised his hands in deprecation, but avowed his inability to interfere or alter the condition of affairs.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure in No. 22.

*Consul Lamb to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 2. Confidential.)
*Erzeroum, February* 24, 1900.

Sir,

SHORTLY after the massacres of November 1895, the Armenian inhabitants of three villages in the Ova Kaza (Plain of Ezeroum), named Oumoudoum, Tsetaouk, and Tfendj, presented Petitions to the Russian Consulate here, expressing their desire to join the Muscovite Church.

This idea, though it is believed to have been inspired by a Russian Armenian in the service of the Consulate, does not seem to have been favourably received by the higher authorities to whom it was referred, but I am informed tha the views of the Russian Government have since undergone a change. At a hint from a Russian Agent fresh Petitions were presented about three months ago, but the drafting of these did not meet with the approval of the Consulate, and they were returned for correction. A new Petition having been drawn up in accordance with the suggestions of the Cousular officials is believed to have been forwarded to the Embassy.

These facts having come to the knowledge of the Local Government, the Gregorian Acting Bishop was sent out to the villages in question to investigate and report: and on his return a prominent villager, whom he indicated as the chief promoter of the movement, was summoned to Erzeroum and imprisoned on a trumped-up charge of assault, but released after a few days.

Yesterday, at the instigation, I believe, of the Government, an Extraordinary Meeting of the representatives of the Gregorian community was held at the Bishop's residence to discuss the measures to be adopted in view of the threatened secession from the National Church, and it was decided to nominate a Commission, comprising five priests and ten laymen, to visit the villages concerned, and endeavour to convince them of the wrongfulness or futility of their proposed action.

The movement, it will be seen, has not yet reached a stage at which its importance can be accurately gauged, but I think it fully deserves the attention which the authorities, civil and religious, are devoting to it.

The motive influencing the villagers appears to be a vague belief that they will escape from, or, at least, obtain some alleviation of, that burden of taxation which is now weighing so heavily upon all sections of the rural population. How far this belief has been deliberately fostered by the instigators of the movement I am unable to state.

Since 1895 the Imperial Government had suspended the collection of the military exemption tax from those towns and villages which had been plundered during the massacres, but it is now engaged in collecting not only the tax for the current year, but also one year's arrears; and orders have also been issued for the collection of all arrears of tithes, &c.

In theory, this action of the Government does not appear unjust, or even ungenerous, but in practice I believe a good deal of injustice is involved, the taxes being demanded from each community as a collective unit, at a figure arbitrarily assessed, and no deduction made for those members who were killed during the massacres themselves, or have died or emigrated since.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HARRY H. LAMB.

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## No. 23.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received March* 19.)

(No. 83. Confidential.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, March* 12, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 29 of the 2nd February, 1899, I have the honour to transmit copy of a further despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, showing that the process of Russianizing the Greek Orthodox schools of Syria is proceeding with unabated vigour under the auspices of the Russian "Société de Palestine."

Mr. Richards states that all the schools of this denomination in Damascus, with a solitary exception, have now been brought under the control of the Russian Consul-General, and he learns from a high authority that throughout Syria and Palestine about 100 schools, containing 8,000 school-children, are now practically administered by the above-mentioned Society, at a cost of some 8,000*l.* a-year.

I may mention that M. Constans, the French Ambassador, took occasion to remark to one of my colleagues a few days ago that the loss of French prestige through the active religious propagandism of Russia in the region in question was most deplorable, and that in this respect the Russian alliance had cost his country very dear.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure in No. 23.

*Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 10. Confidential.)

Sir, *Damascus, February* 19, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 3 of the 17th January, 1899, reporting on the rapid spread of Russian educational influence in this province, it may interest your Excellency to know that the two Greek Orthodox schools situated in the quarter of the city known as the Meidan (one for boys, containing 150 scholars, and the other for girls, containing 100 scholars) have been handed over to the Russian Consul-General here, their status being assimilated to that of the Greek girl-school, which was so transferred early in 1896.

Such transference has for its main effect the payment in the future of the salaries of the teachers, of the cost of the books supplied, and of that of firing, out of the funds of the Palestine Society, while, I believe, the rent of the school building will still be paid by the Greek community.

Of all the Greek Orthodox schools here in Damascus, the chief boy-school alone now maintains its independence of Russian influence, and in that case, too, it is only as a question of "good policy" that that establishment has not been "annexed." It is held, as a matter of prudence, that a certain show of educational independence should be left to the Greek community, for the sake of appearances.

I am informed by a high ecclesiastical dignitary of this faith that he calculates that there are about 100 schools (for boys and girls) in Syria and Palestine, containing, in round numbers, 8,000 pupils, which are now under Russian control, and that they cost the "Société de Palestine" a yearly sum of 10,000 napoleons.

Personally, I should be inclined to think that these figures are somewhat exaggerated, did they not emanate from a prelate who has every opportunity of knowing the truth.

In all these schools portraits of the Czar are to be found hung upon the walls side by side with an icon of the Virgin Mary, or of some Saint, before which the pupils, accompanied by their teachers, bow three times a-day, making the Sign of the Cross. I am also told that the pupils are taught to speak of the Russian Emperor as "Melekna" ("our Sovereign"), an expression which, in the mouths of Ottoman subjects, is of course only applicable to the Sultan.

These things are, it will be objected, the merest trifles. At the same time, they are not without interest when looked upon as straws showing the direction of the wind.

It is stated that boys over five years of age are not admitted into these schools, but there is no age limit as regards girls. The explanation is a boy's mind develops sooner and more rapidly than that of a girl, and that, the earlier the stage at which it receives its first impressions, the less the likelihood of their being effaced by the introduction of others later on in life.



In spite, however, of the strenuous and never-ceasing efforts made by the Palestine Society's agents to "Russify" the rising Greek generation, efforts which, on the whole, have, it must be confessed, been wonderfully successful, yet murmurs are occasionally heard amongst parents, who complain that too much time is devoted to the study of the Russian language, while other much more important subjects are neglected. I not infrequently hear that children are not so well taught in the "Russian" schools as they are, for instance, in British missionary schools, and from time to time there are cases of Greek children who have left our schools for those under Russian patronage being sent back to the former, on the ground of their superiority. These are, however, exceptions, the inducements held out to parents by Russian Agents, not to speak of priestly influence, which is exercised entirely on their side, being superior to anything that British missionaries can offer.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

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## No. 24.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received March* 19.)

(No. 86.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, March* 13, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Beirout, forwarding a report by the Vice-Consul at Haifa on the Jewish Colonies in Palestine.

Mr. Monahan reports the transfer of certain of these Colonies to the "Jewish Colonization Association," a society, which, though its head office is in Paris, is believed by Mr. Monahan to be legally a British Company.

It is, I think, much to be regretted that an Association which seems to exist for the benefit of non-British Jews, should have acquired the status of a British Company, for while it is clear that this would not entitle the individual colonists to our protection, it will, I fear, in the event of differences between the Association in its corporate capacity and the Ottoman Government, be incumbent on the Embassy to protect its interests, although, as appears from Mr. Monahan's Report, its management and capital are French, and the persons for whose benefit it exists seems to be mostly Polish Jews.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure 1 in No. 24.

*Consul-General Drummond Hay to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 7.)

Sir, *Beirout, February* 13, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Excellency a copy of an interesting report which I have received from Mr. Monahan, relative to the changes in the administration of the Jewish Colonies in the Haifa district.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. DRUMMOND HAY.

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Inclosure 2 in No. 24.

*Vice-Consul Monahan to Consul-General Drummond Hay.*

(No. 8.)

Sir, *Haifa, February* 5, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to report that much interest is excited here by pending changes in the administration of Jewish Colonies in Palestine, and by the proposed formation of new ones in this Vice-Consular district.

With the exception of one small, unprosperous, and unhealthy Colony of Russian

Jews, called Khidera, on the boundary of the Jaffa caza, the only Jewish Colony now established in this district is the important one in the caza of Haifa, namely, Samarin or Zichron-Jacob, including its three small dependencies. It has hitherto been supported by Baron Edmund de Rothschild and administered by his French nominees. Its lands are about 4,000 acres (15,000 dunums) mostly vineyards, and its population about 2,000 souls.

Samarin is now being transferred to a Society with an English title "The Jewish Colonization Association" (commonly known here as J.C.A.).

Sajara, in Tiberias caza, between Hattin and Mount Tabor, consisting of a village and about 4,000 acres of arable land, was sold four years ago by an Ottoman subject named Mudawar, to M. Simon Jourdain, a representative of Baron E. de Rothschild. M. Jourdain has lately sold or transferred it to a representative of the same J.C.A. Three other villages near Sajara, having in all about 4,000 acres, are being sold to the same Society by Messrs. Sursok, of Beirout, though the official sale is not yet complete. Two houses have been built on the Sajara lands, but no Jews appear yet to have settled either on these lands or on those of the three other villages. By Ottoman Law no foreign Jew is allowed to buy land in Palestine, but this difficulty is probably being surmounted in the usual manner. Such, in brief, are the changes and acquisitions in this Vice-Consular district.

I understand that the Jewish Colonies in Jaffa and elsewhere in Palestine are also being transferred to the J.C.A.

So far as I can learn this Society is now in one sense only nominally English. The Central Administration is in Paris, the Director-General being a M. Levin (? Levi), who is also at the head of the Alliance Israélite.

I understand, however, though my information is not clear on the point, that the Society is legally a British one. A reason given for the transfer is that British Company Law is more favourable than French Law. Another reason given is the Anti-Semitism in France. I am informed that Baron de Rothschild has in fact never had recourse to the French Government for support or protection.

A commission sent by the J.C.A., to arrange the transfer, is expected here.

It is said that the Baron wishes that the Colonies should not depend on his individual life. I gather that he also probably wishes to get rid of the great sole responsibility for them, though under the new arrangement he takes a part in their management and guarantees the J.C.A. against pecuniary loss. His expenditure on Samarin must have been enormous. He has given it complete modern wine machinery and great cellars, in which I learn there are now as many as 18,000 barrels of wine. The French vines were destroyed by phylloxera, and have had to be gradually replaced at his expense by American ones. The white wine of Samarin is of very good quality, but the wine trade has hitherto not been a success. The Colony is supplied with good water, brought up a hill by steam power, another gift of the Baron. To his generosity are also due, mainly, if not entirely, the following advantages. There are some kilometres of excellent roads in different directions, and the hedges, wire fencing, and rows of trees have a most European appearance. There is the local salaried Administration, including a Director, secretary, accountant, engineer, wine expert, and doctor, with their houses and offices on an expensive scale. There are a good small hospital, a pleasant public garden, and a large store in which much business is done with natives and with colonists. The Baron, besides, gives a subvention of, I am informed, 12 fr. per month to every colonist until a living can be got from the land, the colonists being afterwards supposed to repay the Baron on easy terms and finally take possession of the land.

It is expected that this system of subventions will be largely modified by the J.C.A. and that the new Administration will be more economical.

The Samarin Jews seem to be mostly from Gallicia and Poland. They are supposed and said to work habitually in the vineyards, but personal observation inclines me to think that very little manual work on the land is done by any of them. The native fallaheen are employed for the purpose.

Foreign Jews are not supposed to be allowed to settle in this country, but Jewish settlers from Europe often arrive in Haifa where there seem to be exceptional facilities for their admission by pecuniary arrangement with the local officials.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. H. MONAHAN.

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## No. 25.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received March* 19.)

(No. 89. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March* 15, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 68 of the 1st instant, and previous correspondence, I have the honour to report that the question of the Russian Railway demands in the northern and eastern parts of Asia Minor was again submitted by the Sultan yesterday to the consideration of the Council of Ministers.

I have not yet been able to find out with what result, but I am informed by the German Ambassador that the question now hinges on whether the Russian capitalists shall be obliged to form themselves into an Ottoman Company as in the case of the Anatolian Railway Company, or whether they shall keep their foreign nationality. In any case there seems little doubt that the Sultan is gradually yielding to the insistent demands put forward by the Russian Government, and that they will ere long obtain a practical monopoly of all railway enterprise in the country which they vaguely describe as the neighbourhood of the Black Sea.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R O'CONOR.

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## No. 26.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received March* 26.)

(No. 92.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March* 20, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 75, Confidential, of the 7th instant, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, reporting further on the threatened secession of Armenians to the Russian Orthodox Church.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure in No. 26.

*Consul Lamb to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 5. Confidential.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, March* 7, 1900.

IN continuation of my despatch No. 2 of the 24th ultimo, I have the honour to report that the Delegates of the Gregorian community, of whose nomination I therein informed your Excellency, have duly made the tour of the Erzeroum plain and, after expatiating to the villagers on the futility and imprudence of secession from the National Church, obtained from them a Mazbata declaring their abiding devotion to that institution, as well as their complete submission to the Imperial Government, and entire satisfaction with the local authorities. The only complaint allowed to appear in this document is that of their increasing impoverishment and consequent inability to meet the demands of the tax collectors.

I am told that the Russian Consulate-General now claims officially to have rejected all the petitions presented to it on this subject, but I have good reason to believe that the petitions were in fact received by, and even practically prepared under the direction of Colonel Prjevalski, the Military Attaché, who left here a fortnight ago for Tiflis.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HARRY H. LAMB.

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No. 27.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received March* 26.)

(No. 95.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March* 20, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 591 of the 21st December, 1899, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, reporting that the Greek Orthodox Patriarch has deposed the Bishops of Tarsus and Diarbekir.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure in No. 27.

*Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 13.)
Sir, *Damascus, March* 3, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 73 of the 8th December last, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that the Greek Orthodox Patriarch Malateos, acting in accord and after consultation with those members of the Synod who are still here, has deposed Bishop Germanos of Tarsus and Bishop Benjamin of Diarbekir, and declared their Sees to be vacant. In view of the alleged determination of these prelates to secede from the Province of Antioch, together with their brother Bishops of Erzeroum and Aleppo, and to join that of the Œcumenical Patriarch, it will be not uninteresting to note the results of their deposition.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

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No. 28.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received March* 26.)

(No. 104. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March* 22, 1900.

IN continuation of my despatch No. 89, Confidential, of the 15th instant and previous correspondence, I have the honour to report that the Imperial Iradé sanctioning the decision of the Council of Ministers with regard to the Russian demand for the control of railways in the north of Asia Minor was issued a few days ago.

The decision of the Council of Ministers appears to be as follows: The railways from Ada Bazar to Heraclea (Erigli) and from Angora to Sivas and Diarbekir viâ Kaisarea and Kharput, which have been already granted to the Germans, are excepted. The Ottoman Government reserves to itself the right to construct railways in Asia Minor, and the words "par ses propres moyens," which the Russians insisted on retaining, have been omitted; but it is stipulated that the Ottoman Government shall consult with the Russian Government before building any railways in those parts. If the Turkish Government does not build the railways, the Concession shall be granted to Russian capitalists on the same terms as the Concession of the Anatolian Railway to the Germans. It is not specified apparently that they shall form themselves into an Ottoman Company, but that is understood by the Ottoman Government.

In other words, the whole littoral of the Asiatic coast of the Black Sea as far as Erigli and the whole of Asia Minor north of the line from Angora to Diarbekir falls within the exclusive sphere of Russia as far as railway construction is concerned. No specific time has been fixed during which the railways are to be built, nor has the Russian Government shown any anxiety to hasten such undertakings; on the contrary, they have assured the Ottoman Government that it will probably be many years before they are ready to take advantage of their new privileges. In the meantime, they are quite satisfied at blocking railway development throughout this vast region, and condemning this country to remain for a prolonged period in its present condition. In waiving the clause



that the Turkish Government should construct the railway "par ses propres moyens," the Russians have been on very sure ground, for it is obvious that no foreign capitalists will subscribe to build a railway which is to be administered and controlled by the Turkish Government.

The Sultan has, it would appear, yielded to the Russian demands with extreme reluctance. His Majesty is no doubt aware of the effect it will have throughout the country, and especially upon his co-religionists who see the strongholds of Mahommedanism passing under the virtual control of Russia; nor is His Majesty unaware of the arm he is putting into the hands of the Young Turk and Revolutionary party. He seems, however, to be in reality more afraid of a recrudescence, of Armenian disturbances than of the unpopularity which will be caused by his yielding to the Russian demands, and I learn from the Russian Ambassador that His Majesty was strongly influenced by the threat that, in case of refusal, the Armenian refugees would be forcibly sent across the frontier. These refugees, I may observe, who were originally spoken of as some 10,000 or 20,000, are now magnified into 50,000 or 60,000.

Perhaps the most curious part of the negotiations which have now resulted in establishing a Russian sphere of influence throughout the north of Asia Minor is the fact that the Russian Government persisted in impressing upon the Sultan that compliance with the request was in the real interest of Turkey, and that it was preferred in a sincerely cordial and friendly spirit, in order that a great part of the Empire should not fall under the influence of Germany and other foreign Powers, who may ultimately be interested in the Koniah–Bagdad–Basrah Railway.

As far as I could discover, the Ottoman Government has not appealed to any foreign Embassay for assistance, though I have no doubt they have asked unofficially for the advice and counsel of the Germans, who have been careful to observe a passive attitude. It is certain that the Russians have not in any way sought the help of the French Embassy, and I think it may be safely said that as long as M. Constans is Ambassador here, they would not have received it if they had applied.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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No. 29.

*Sir E. Monson to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received March* 28.)

(No. 135.)
My Lord, *Paris, March* 27, 1900.

THE French press quote from the "Frankfurter Zeitung" a statement that the chief points of the Convention between Russia and Turkey with regard to the Asia Minor railways are as follows:—

A Russian Syndicate shall have the right of preference for the construction and working of all the railways ("lignes ferrées") within a certain zone, to be fixed as in the case of the Anatolian railways conceded to a German Syndicate.

This zone will include nearly all the coast-line of the Black Sea, viz., the Vilayet of Kastamuni up to Erekli on the west, and the Vilayets of Trebizond and Erzeroum, as well as portions of the Vilayets of Sivas, Kharput, and Bitlis.

The southern limit will be a line drawn from Erekli to Van, passing through Angora and Sivas, thus not infringing on the rights acquired by the Anatolian Railway Concession, and especially the branch line from Adabazar to Erekli on the west.

It is considered of the greatest importance that, on the one hand, the sphere of Russian influence should extend to Erekli, which is 200 kilom. distance from Constantinople, and that the Russian Government should, on the other hand, have abandoned their original claim to the Concession themselves in favour of a Russian Syndicate.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDMUND MONSON.

## No. 30.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received April* 3.)

(No. 112. Confidential.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, March* 28, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 483, Confidential, of the 12th October, 1899, I have the honour to report that Mgr. Ormanian, the Gregorian Armenian Patriarch, has again tendered his resignation, and that, in spite of the refusal of the Sultan to accept it, and of repeated efforts made to induce his Beatitude to withdraw it, he states that his decision is irrevocable, and has informed the Mixed Council at Koum Kapu that he no longer occupies the Patriarchal Throne.

As a last attempt to persuade Mgr. Ormanian to alter his resolution, a message has been conveyed to him from Yildiz requesting him to wait a few days longer, and promising, as has been so often promised before, that the causes of his resignation shall be removed.

The immediate cause of Mgr. Ormanian's resignation is the irregular procedure adopted in the election of the Catholicos of Sis, which is not in accordance with that sanctioned by the Iradé of 1871, and which his Beatitude maintains to be a first step towards withdrawing the Archiepiscopal See from the jurisdiction of the Patriarch.

The dispute which had arisen over this question is explained in Mr. de Bunsen's despatch to your Lordship No. 360 of the 18th June, 1898.

I have the honour to inclose herewith copy of Mgr. Ormanian's letter tendering his resignation to the Minister of Justice and Public Worship, which his Beatitude has been so good as to communicate confidentially to me.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure in No. 30.

*The Armenian Patriarch to the Minister of Justice.*

LES formalités de l'élection du Catholicos de Sis, basées sur les principes fondamentaux et les canons ecclésiastiques de l'Église Arménienne, avaient été sanctionnées par un Iradé Impérial de l'an 1288 de l'Hégire (1871), et déjà mises en exécution dans les deux dernières élections.

On était en droit d'attendre que les mêmes principes et formalités seraient suivis dans la prochaine élection, mais nous apprenons qu'au contraire on procède en ce moment à Adana aux opérations électorales dans un sens tout à fait opposé aux précédents.

Il ne reste plus aucun doute que le nouveau système d'élection tend à écarter le Catholicosat de Sis du cercle de la juridiction du Patriarcat Arménien de Constantinople.

Depuis les temps de la conquête glorieuse de Constantinople, le Patriarcat Arménien de Constantinople est reconnu par le Gouvernement Impérial comme le Patriarcat de tous les Arméniens résidant en Turquie. De même, la conservation des privilèges et prérogatives religieuses et ecclésiastiques, enregistrés dans les archives de la Grande Chancellerie Impériale de la Sublime Porte, mentionnés dans tous les Bérats octroyés aux Patriarches, aux Catholicos, et aux Prélats diocésains, et portant la sanction suprême des Souverains Ottomans, se trouve sous la garantie du Gouvernement Impérial. Récemment encore, Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan, notre auguste Maître, a daigné ordonner par Iradé spécial que toutes les formalités de l'élection du Catholicos de Sis soient exécutées strictement d'après les règles qui avaient été observées dans les élections précédentes, et qu'il n'y soit pas dérogé.

Malheureusement, nous nous trouvons en ce moment en face d'une situation qui prive le Patriarcat Arménien de tous les droits et juridictions qu'il possède *ab antiquo* sur le peuple Arménien de Sis et de ses dépendances (Cilicie), et qu'il prive en même temps le Patriarche Arménien de Constantinople d'être le Patriarche de tous les Arméniens appartenant à la même race et à la même religion qui se trouve dans la Turquie entière.

Je me trouvais déjà dans une situation difficile et insoutenable à la suite de l'insuccès des demandes et requêtes réitérées que j'avais présentées pour le réglement des différentes questions intéressant le Patriarcat et la nation Arménienne, le soulagement des nécessités



multiples, et la suppression des mesures exceptionnelles créées exclusivement pour les Arméniens qui les exposent aux plus graves préjudices moraux et matériels.

Les nouvelles mesures prises en ce qui concerne le Catholicosat de Sis, qui dérogent aux canons visant la constitution même de l'Église Arménienne, et sont en opposition au *statu quo*, aggravent davantage ma situation.

Tous mes prédécesseurs ont pu sauvegarder les droits du Patriarcat Arménien de Constantinople vis-à-vis du Catholicosat de Sis. La reconnaissance de ces mêmes droits et prérogatives spirituelles consacrées *ab antiquo* m'est pourtant refusée.

Sur le Siège Patriarcal que j'occupe il m'est absolument impossible de considérer cet état de chose avec indifférence, et pour ne pas rester responsable vis-à-vis de Dieu et de Sa Majesté le Sultan, ainsi que vis-à-vis de l'Église et de la nation Arménienne, je me sens forcé de me retirer des fonctions Patriarcales, et je vous prie de vouloir bien accepter ma démission.

*Le* 8 (21) *Mars*, 1900.

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## No. 31.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received April* 3.)

(No. 113.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, March* 28, 1900.

IT is officially announced in the Turkish press that the direct taxes of the Empire are increased by 6 per cent. of their former amount. The proceeds of this surtax will, it is stated, be applied to the requirements of the army.

The burden of taxation is already very severely felt in the country, especially in the poverty-stricken districts of Armenia. In Albania the collection of the taxes has for long been a matter of great difficulty, and the present increase will not tend to allay the discontent prevailing in that province.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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## No. 32.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received April* 3.)

(No. 114. Confidential.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, March* 28, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 83, Confidential, of the 12th instant, respecting the spread of Russian influence in the Orthodox schools of Syria, I have the honour to report that the action of the Russian Embassy, which, while posing as the protector of Orthodoxy in Turkey, has, for some time past, been undermining the influence of the Patriarch, and curtailing the privileges of the Orthodox Church throughout the country, has at last stirred the Œcumenical Patriarch to action.

I learn most confidentially that the Patriarch and some few of the more influential members of the Œcumenical Council have drawn up and submitted to the Czar, and to the Holy Synod of Russia, a long Memorandum exposing their grievances and asking for a clear statement of the views and intentions of Russia.

This document first calls attention to the gradual absorption by Russia of the monasteries at Mount Athos, and to the action of Russian agents, resulting in the complete elimination of the power of the Patriarchate which has existed there *ab antiquo*.

The interference of the Russian Consul and Embassy in the election of the Patriarch of Antioch, in which matter the legitimate influence of the Patriarchate was deliberately thwarted, is adverted to.

The Memorandum then goes on to cite the intrigues of Palestine Society, which is presided over by a Grand Duke, and the action of that Society, which has resulted in so many schools passing entirely out of the control of the Patriarchate, thus leading to the creation of an independent Orthodox party in Syria.

Lastly, the Memorandum refers to Russian policy with regard to the Bulgarian Schismatic Church, with which Russia appears to be now in complete agreement, since that Church, with the assistance of Russian agents on the spot, and the support of the Embassy

in this capital, is slowly but surely encroaching on the properties and privileges of the Greek Orthodox community throughout Macedonia.

The Memorandum, before being sent in, was submitted to the Bishop of Jerusalem, and received his approbation. It is clearly and strongly worded, and ends with an appeal to the Czar to the following effect: His Majesty has always been the champion of peace, he had taken the lead in the Peace Conference, and since he ascended the throne all his utterances have been in the interests of peace. He is the protector of the Orthodox Church in the East. The Patriarch asks if the policy now being pursued meets with His Majesty's approval. His Majesty should know that the acts of which complaint is made are disturbing the conscience of the Orthodox community, which has hitherto looked to him as their protector.

The progress of the Orthodox Church has been arrested, the power of the Patriarch weakened, and the eventual result will be troubles and disorders.

I learn that the Patriarch has not received a reply to his communication, a copy of which has been sent to the Russian Ambassador from St. Petersburgh.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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## No. 33.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received April* 3.)

(No. 115. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March* 28, 1900.

REFERRING to my despatch No. 104 of the 22nd instant, I have the honour to report that the Russian Ambassador has not yet notified the Sublime Porte of his acceptance of the modified proposals approved by the Council of Ministers and sanctioned by the Sultan in regard to the Russian demands for exclusive right to construct railways in the north of Asia Minor.

Whatever hitch there be would seem to come from the hesitation of the Russian Government to recognize any previous Concession to the Germans to extend their railway from Angora to Van though willing to admit such Concession as far as Sivas or Diarbekir.

I have the honour to inclose a copy of the Imperial Rescript which is said to have been issued granting the Concession to the Russians, but I cannot vouch for its authenticity.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

P.S.—Since writing the above I am told that the Russian Embassy say that the supposed Imperial Iradé is apochryphal, and has been circulated with a view to prevent the Sultan yielding to the Russian demands.

N. R. O'C.

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### Inclosure in No. 33.

*Imperial Rescript.*

TENANT avant tout à assurer le bien-être de mon peuple et en témoignage de l'amitié ancienne et inaltérable qui nous lie à Sa Majesté Impériale l'Empereur de Russie, qui à maintes occasions nous a rendu d'inoubliables services auxquels nous avons de même répondu par des services en tout temps et tant que cela nous a été possible, nous avons cru bien faire en nous abouchant avec les Conseillers de Sa Majesté Impériale pour concerter ensemble les mesures à prendre pour assurer le développement des ressources et des richesses de notre territoire sis en Asie dans les parages de la Mer Noire.

En conséquence par les présentes nous faisons savoir à qui de droit, que comme résultat de ces concertations nous avons cru bon d'acquiescer aux désirs exprimés par le Representant de Sa Majesté Impériale et décrétons que dans l'avenir les Concessions à donner pour la construction et l'exploitation des voies de communication dans les bassins de la Mer Noire, à l'exception des voies déjà concédées, ne seront accordées qu'aux



sujets Russes, aux mêmes conditions qu'est accordée à d'autres personnes la Concession pour la construction de la ligne ferrée de Bagdad.

Nous exprimons l'assurance qu'ainsi les capitaux et les connaissances techniques du pays voisin et ami seront mis au service de notre peuple bien-aimé et serviront à assurer le développement de notre pays. Nous ordonnons que le contenu de la présente soit dûment annoncé aux Représentants de Sa Majesté Impériale le Czar, qui, nous sommes sûrs, lui feront bon accueil.

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## No. 34.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received April* 3.)

(No. 116.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March* 29, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 420 of the 3rd September, 1899, I have the honour to report that I have received a further letter from Messrs. Macnamara and Bond, inquiring what progress has been made in the question of the indemnities claimed by British subjects for losses suffered during the Armenian massacres in Constantinople in 1896.

I have not seen my way to press this question very strongly on the Turkish Government of late, and I am rather inclined to await the return of the United States' Minister, with whom I have agreed to act, as far as possible, in common, in the hope that he will have received instructions from his Government to press energetically for a settlement. It is quite certain that very strong pressure will be necessary to induce the Sultan to agree to any arrangement. So distasteful indeed is the subject to him that I have reason to believe that His Imperial Majesty has done all he could to prevent Mr. Strauss' return, in fear of his attitude in this respect, but I am glad to say without the least success.

Copies of Messrs. Macnamara and Bond's letter, and of my reply, are inclosed herewith.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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### Inclosure 1 in No. 34.

*Messrs. Macnamara and Bond to Sir N. O'Conor.*

Sir, *Constantinople, March* 26, 1900.

WE, the undersigned Delegates of the British sufferers by pillage during the Constantinople massacres of 1896, pressed by some of our fellow-sufferers, who find themselves in very serious financial embarrassment, most respectfully beg to request that your Excellency be good enough to inform us what is the present position of these claims.

We have, &c.
(Signed) J. MACNAMARA.
RICH. BOND.

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### Inclosure 2 in No. 34.

*Sir N. O'Conor to Messrs. Macnamara and Bond.*

Gentlemen, *Constantinople, March* 29, 1900.

IN reply to your letter of the 26th instant, I beg to inform you that the question of the indemnities claimed by British subjects for losses incurred during the Armenian massacres in 1896 is one which is constantly before me, but I much regret to say that no progress has been made towards a settlement since I wrote to you in September, 1899.

I am, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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No. 35.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received April 9.)*

(No. 43. Commercial. Confidential.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, April 5, 1900.*

I HAVE had the honour to receive your Lordship's despatch No. 23, Commercial, of the 28th ultimo, inclosing copy of a letter relating to a project which is about to be put forward by a group of English gentlemen for the construction of two lines of railway in Asiatic Turkey, the one to run from Samsun, on the Black Sea, to a point in the Gulf of Alexandretta, and the other to the Persian Gulf.

I presume that in taking up this scheme the gentlemen concerned have made themselves acquainted with the various plans which have been put forward in the past in respect of railways designed to traverse the same or a similar line of country, and that they are aware of the privileged position as regards railways which Russia is seeking to obtain for herself in Northern Asia Minor, and Germany in the territory lying between Konia and Bagdad.

As regards the railway which is to traverse Asia Minor from Samsun southwards, the Memorandum transmitted in my despatch No. 12, Commercial, of the 2nd February, 1899, mentions a Concession to construct such a line which was granted some years ago to Baron Mackar, a Belgian financier; and although this Concession is believed to have lapsed, I am informed that it is being taken up again, at the instigation of the Ottoman Government, by an international group, of which Messrs. Rechnitzer, Erlanger, and Powlett are the leading members.

I understand that these gentlemen have realized that it would be hopeless to embark on a railway project for Northern Asia Minor without a previous agreement with Russia, and that they are endeavouring to come to terms on the subject with M. de Witte at St. Petersburgh.

The Russian Embassy at Constantinople is also stated to be inquiring into the Mackar Concession with a view to taking it up on behalf of the Russian Government, and whatever may be the result of these negotiations, they point to the conclusion that the Russians have no idea of abandoning their pretensions as regards the construction of railways in the Black Sea regions of Asia Minor. It is pretty certain, therefore, that any English group which may enter the field against them will have to contend with serious opposition, and it is most desirable that they should at least acquaint themselves thoroughly with the situation before incurring any considerable expenditure.

The same remarks apply to any scheme which would come in conflict with the German project of a line to the Persian Gulf, and, apart from German opposition, it behoves the promoters of such a scheme to study carefully the question whether it is possible for such a line to be constructed, as Mr. Halley-Stewart's group proposes to construct it, without a kilometric guarantee.

I have no wish to discourage any well-considered proposal for the investment of British capital in Turkey, but in the scanty information furnished by Mr. Butler Carter's letter to your Lordship's Department, I do not find any indication of a consciousness on the part of the English group of the obstacles which they will have to encounter, and I think it would be well to explain confidentially to these gentlemen how matters stand, in order that they may not embark lightly or without full consideration in an enterprise involving such heavy outlay.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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No. 36.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received April 16.)*

(No. 126.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, April 7, 1900.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 115, Confidential, of the 28th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch, which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting the effect in that part of



the country caused by the projected construction of a Russian railway from Kars to Erzeroum.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure in No. 36.

*Major Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 16.)

Sir, *Van, March 17, 1900.*

I HAVE the honour to report that statements in various papers that Russia had obtained from His Majesty the Sultan an Iradé to construct a railway from Kars to Erzeroum have been received here with consternation by all the Moslems.

And for the Turks an extremely strong feeling is manifested against the Sultan and the Constantinople Government for thus bartering away the independence of their country.

They say "We have become like Persia and given away our country without a struggle to Russia."

This is with reference to the recent reported Railway Concessions given by Persia to Russia.

In military circles the effect of such a railway from Kars to Erzeroum is seriously discussed, as all this part of the country, and especially the Erzeroum fortress, would be then even more open to Russia than it is at present.

A report which is also current, for which I cannot trace the foundation, that England intends, with or without an Iradé, to build a railway from Alexandretta, by Diarbekir, to Van, is also in circulation here, and is generally believed. Germany seems to be mistrusted as a source of practical assistance, and I think I am right in saying that England is looked to as the only Power able and willing to assist Turkey against Russian encroachments.

If such a railway from Alexandretta to Van were proposed it would meet with no opposition from the authorities in this part of the country.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

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No. 37.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received April 16.)*

(No. 133.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, April 10, 1900.*

I HAVE the honour to report, with reference to my despatch No. 115, Confidential, of the 20th ultimo, that I inquired of the Minister for Foreign Affairs yesterday afternoon whether it was true, as currently reported, that an agreement had been come to with the Russian Ambassador in regard to railways in Northern Asia Minor.

Tewfik Pasha replied that proposals had been submitted to the Russian Ambassador on the 31st ultimo, and that his reply accepting them had been received a few days later.

According to this arrangement, his Excellency said, the Ottoman Government reserved to itself the right to construct railways north of the projected line from Angora to Sivas, Kharput, Diarbekir, and Van, but if they did not make the railways themselves, the exclusive right of construction should appertain to the Russians on the same conditions as the Anatolian Railway Concession. The line from Ada Bazar to Heraclea (Eregli) was recognized by the Russians as outside their sphere. It was further positively stated, his Excellency said, that the Angora–Sivas Railway Concession extended to Van.

I also inquired whether anything had been decided in regard to the Mackar concession for a railway from Samsoun to Sivas. Tewfik Pasha replied that they had urged the Belgians to put forward the Concession granted to them some years ago, but that nothing had come of it, and he supposed, although the matter was not definitely settled, that this line was now within the Russian railway sphere.

There is very little difference in this information from that previously supplied to your Lordship, except that the Minister states positively that they have reserved the right of giving a Concession to Van to any foreign Company other than Russian. I question whether the Russians are able or anxious to construct railways at present, or for several years, within the sphere allotted to them by this most unfortunate Agreement, but this does not necessarily exclude their seeking foreign capital for the purpose. It decidedly excludes, however, any competition, and confirms the observations which I had the honour to make in my despatch No. 43, Commercial, of the 5th instant, referring to Messrs. Carter's intention of seeking a concession for a railway from Samsoun to Sivas, unless under agreement with the Russians.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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No. 38.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received April 16.)*

(No. 53. Commercial. Confidential.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, April 12, 1900.*

WITH reference to my Confidential despatch No. 43, Commercial, of the 5th instant, I have the honour to report to your Lordship that further information from a private source has reached me showing that M. Rechnitzer's financial group are making some progress towards the realization of their plan for securing the concession for a railway from Samsoun on the Black Sea across Asia Minor to the south.

M. Rechnitzer now believes he can arrange matters with the Russian Government. He has been in communication with the Russian Embassy, and M. Maimoun, his agent at Constantinople, has good hopes of obtaining the Sultan's consent to the scheme, as a compensation for the rejection of M. Rechnitzer's proposal for a railway from the Syrian coast to Bagdad, in which Mahmoud Pasha, the Sultan's brother-in-law, was also largely interested. The primary object is to obtain the concurrence of Russia, without which nothing can now be done in Northern Asia Minor, and it is expected that Russia may demand a kilometric guarantee from Turkey in addition to satisfactory conditions as to the control and working of the line.

I learn that M. Rechnitzer has not abandoned his hopes of obtaining likewise the concession for the irrigation of Mesopotamia, which formed the subject of my despatch to your Lordship, No. 594, of the 21st December, 1899, as well as a concession for a line from Bagdad to Kerbela.

These latter concessions, affecting as they do a country in which British interests are largely involved, ought to be carefully watched. It would be most unfortunate if M. Rechnitzer, encouraged by a success in the Samsoun–Sivas Railway, set to work to form a Company under Russian auspices for the exploration and development of the lower Tigris and Euphrates Valleys and the Kerbela district.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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No. 39.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received April 23.)*

(No. 142. Confidential.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, April 18, 1900.*

I HAVE the honour to report that the Œcumenical Patriarch has received a reply from M. Pobiedonozev, the Imperial Procurator at the Holy Synod, to the Memorandum which, as reported in my despatch No. 114, Confidential, of the 28th ultimo, his Beatitude had addressed to the Emperor of Russia and to the Holy Synod, complaining of Russian encroachments on the influence and privileges of the Œcumenical Patriarchate.



I understand that the Patriarch is much disappointed by this communication, which is not of a nature to allay his anxiety. It states somewhat ambiguously that the Emperor regrets "que les circonstances actuelles entravent la marche des affaires ecclésiastiques," and, with regard to the Patriarch's complaint as to the action of the Russian Palestine Society in Syria, asserts that that country is outside the Œcumenical Patriarchate's sphere of influence.

The Patriarch is uncertain whether to regard this as the reply of the Emperor or the Holy Synod, and is waiting to see whether any further communication will be sent to him.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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No. 40.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received April 23.)*

(No. 57. Commercial.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, April 19, 1900.*

I HAVE received from Messrs. Edwin Pears, Sir William Whittall, James Gilchrist, and Albert Simmons, who state that tney represent the whole body of the English share- and bondholders of the Mersina–Adana Railway, a letter, of which a copy is inclosed, asking for my intervention on behalf of the Company under the following circumstances.

The railway in question was built with English and French capital, the English share predominating, and though the concern is nominally a "Société Anonyme Ottomane," its chief office was for a considerable time in London, which is still the place of meeting of the debenture holders. The main inducement to subscribe to this enterprise, which offered little prospect of profit so long as it extended only from Mersina to Adana, is stated to have been the expectation of obtaining a prolongation eventually into the interior. No opportunity was lost of pressing the Ottoman Government for the necessary Concessions, but the Company was put off by various pretexts, and it has now become apparent in the view of the English subscribers, that their interests have been sacrificed to those of the German Railway, which is about to traverse their line of country in order to be extended to Bagdad and the Persian Gulf.

Mr. Pears called a few days ago to give further explanations. I reminded him that I had broached the subject to him of my own accord eighteen months ago, and that he had then given me to understand that as there was French capital in the enterprise, the French Embassy were attending to the matter. I pointed out to him that what he was now at the eleventh hour asking me to do was nothing less than that I should use my influence to deflect the proposed Konia–Bagdad line in order to benefit a short local line which could not be said to have a sphere of influence beyond the country which it traversed.

I told him I did not see my way to doing this. It would be only courting failure, and it would be interpreted by Germany as a decidedly unfriendly act. Twelve or fifteen months ago something might have been done, but the opportunity had been lost, and it was only when the French had failed to assist them that the Company came to me.

I added that, in my opinion, all that I could possibly do would be to show such interest in the railway as would possibly induce the German Railway interest to make terms with the English Company and to buy their line. I thought the best plan would be that I should speak to Baron von Marschall, as indeed I had already done, and explain that if an arrangement could be made with the Mersina–Adana Railway, it would probably have a good effect in London and among British capitalists.

Mr. Pears ultimately concurred.

I have since had an opportunity of mentioning the matter again to the German Ambassador. I told his Excellency of Mr. Pears' visit to me on behalf of the English Railway, and of the upshot of my reply to his request, which I trusted would convince his Excellency that I was avoiding any step which might have the appearance of unfriendliness to the great enterprise which Germany had in view.

Baron von Marschall thanked me and said that he had already reported carefully

to his Government my language on the previous occasion when I had spoken to him on the subject, and that he had explained to them my view as to an arrangement between the German and English interests concerned.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure in No. 40.

*Messrs. Pears, Whittall, and others to Sir N. O'Conor.*

Sir, 67, *Rue Voivode* [*undated*].

THE Undersigned share- and debenture-holders of the Mersina-Adana Railway have the honour to request your assistance under the following circumstances:—

The above railway was built with English and French capital, but principally English. Although the Company had to be formed as a "Société Anonyme Ottomane," nevertheless the construction and the working of the enterprise have been mainly in the hands of British subjects.

The chief office of the Company was for a considerable time in London, and its Board meetings were generally held there. At present the Board meets at Constantinople, its Chairman being Mr. Edwin Pears.

The debenture-holders still hold their meetings in London, the last being held on the 18th September last year.

The Concession for the Mersina-Adana Railway, being without any kilometric guaranty, was not in itself an attractive investment for capitalists. Although the construction and the working of the railway have been of great advantage to the inhabitants of the country through which it passes, and although the railway has been of use to the country and the Government, it has proved a very disastrous undertaking for the persons who put their money in it.

The inducement to English capitalists to take part in the undertaking was that the line was regarded as the commencement of a railway that would be extended into the interior. It could not be foreseen that the prolongation of any other railway would be allowed to enter the zone of country from which the Mersina-Adana Railway derived its traffic, nor that any Concession would be granted to other companies coming into the field which would interfere with a railway made at an enormous sacrifice, in order faithfully to fulfil its engagements.

The Undersigned state with confidence that the Company has neglected no steps to satisfy the demands of the Government and to obtain the extension of the line. From the first, however, the Company met with difficulties the source of which can only now be understood. In 1892 Baron de Vendeuvre, one of the Directors of the Company, endeavoured to obtain a Concession of a line from Arabli to Eregli, with junction to Adana.

This was refused under the pretext that the Ottoman Government could not bind itself to grant further kilometric guarantees.

Baron de Vendeuvre then offered to construct the line with narrow gauge and without kilometric guaranty. To this the reply was given that as the State intended to connect Bagdad with Constantinople by a line passing through Angora, Cæsarea, and Diarbekir, it had no wish that a line should be constructed from Adana.

In presence of this new reply, which varied from the first, the Company judged that its only chance of obtaining extension was to ask for smaller Concessions limited to the Plain of Adana (110 kilom.) with a branch line to Kars and Youmourtalik.

The Board offered, on the 10th August, 1896, to construct this line of the normal width and without kilometric guaranty. This project met with the approval of all the Departments of State, and was sent to the Arz in October 1897. Two months after an Imperial Iradé was issued declaring that the project in question must wait until the tracing of the Bagdad line was decided upon, and this although the prolongation demanded in no sense interfered with the German project of the Angora-Cæsarea-Diarbekir-Bagdad Railway many years afterwards.

Subsequent events have revealed the causes of the unfair attitude of the Imperial Ottoman Government towards the Company. An Imperial Iradé granted *en principe* a Concession to a German group for a line going from Konia to Bagdad, through Eregli and Marash, with kilometric guaranty.



If the Concession upon the above tracing be adopted, there appears no reason why the prolongation asked for by the Board as far as Osmania, with branches to Kars and Youmourtalik, should not also be given. If, on the other hand, the Bagdad Railway should traverse the Valley of Jahakitsou, in the plains of Adana, in order to arrive at the Gulf of Alexandretta, which, we understand, is contemplated, such a course would be in equity an invasion of the rights of priority of the Mersina-Adana Railway Company, and would show that all its demands have hitherto been trifled with and rejected only to favour the German monopoly of railways in Asia Minor. In such case the Mersina-Adana line will have no hope before it, and the English capitalists who have put their money in the undertaking will be seriously injured and their capital entirely lost.

On behalf of such capitalists and of all the shareholders and bondholders of the railway, who have over 400,000*l.* at stake, and who have hitherto derived a nominal benefit from their investments, we beg to request your Excellency to bring the matter before the Imperial Ottoman Government and before His Majesty the Sultan with the object of pointing out to him the enormous loss with which they are threatened, and to point out that, in equity and good faith, they had reason to believe that in undertaking to construct and work a railway in Turkey without any kilometric guaranty they would be at least secure against permission being given to any other group of capitalists to cut off from them the chief source of their revenue.

The Undersigned venture to think that if it were represented that the Government of Her Majesty would not remain indifferent to an attitude so prejudicial to British interests, and this merely to render a favour to the interests of another nationality, such representations would be of use.

Trusting that your Excellency will see fit to make such representations, we have, &c.

(Signed) EDWIN PEARS.
J. W. WHITTALL.
JAMES GILCHRIST.
ALBERT SIMMONS.

The above signatures of the English Directors may be taken as representing those of the whole body of English share- and bondholders.

E. P.

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No. 41.

*Sir C. Scott to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received April* 27.)

(No. 4. Commercial.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *St. Petersburgh, April* 27, 1900.

REFERRING to the present tension between the United States' and Ottoman Governments, Count Mouravieff said to me two days ago that it was evidently an apprehension of having to satisfy at once similar and larger claims of other Powers that made the Sultan so unwilling to yield to American demands.

I hear from French Ambassador that Count Mouravieff said the same to him, and that Russia has been urging, both at Washington and Constantinople, that matters should not be pushed to extremities, but that both Governments should show moderation. He thinks that Count Mouravieff will confine himself to this line of action.

French Ambassador told me also that from the latest reports which his Government had received from Washington, the United States' Government does not at present contemplate coercive measures in the Mediterranean. The French Government would view such measures with some alarm.

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No. 42.

*The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 88.)

Sir, *Foreign Office, April* 28, 1900.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 57, Commercial, of the 19th instant, reporting your conversation with Mr. Pears and your interview with the German Ambassador on the subject of the affairs of the Messina–Adana Railway Company.

I approve the attitude adopted by your Excellency and the action which you have taken in this matter.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

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No. 43.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received April* 30.)

(No. 144.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, April* 25, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 95 of the 20th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, reporting further elections of Greek Bishops to the Sees of Aleppo and the Hauran, and the decision to elect a Bishop of Diarbekir.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure in No. 43.

*Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 23.)

Sir, *Damascus, April* 6, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 13 of the 3rd ultimo, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that the Russian Consul-General had a long conference with the Patriarch Malateos on the afternoon of the 2nd instant, which lasted four hours, and the result of which was that a Synod was convoked on the following day. This body, which was composed of the Patriarch himself and the Bishops of Akkar, Tripoli, and Palmyra, proceeded to elect the Archimandrite Macarios of Beirout, and the Archimandrite Silibistros (Sylvester) of Tarsus to the Bishoprics of Aleppo and the Hauran respectively, while it was decided that the election of an Archimandrite of Mersina, whose name has not yet transpired, to the Bishopric of Diarbekir, should be held on the 7th instant.

The diocese of the Hauran is a new creation prompted, no doubt, by the desire to extend the scope of the action of the "native" party and so counterbalance "Greek" influence in other quarters.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

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No. 44.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received April* 30.)

(No. 152. Confidential.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, April* 26, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 112, Confidential, of the 28th ultimo, I have the honour to report that on the occasion of a visit which Mr. Block paid the Armenian Gregorian Patriarch a few days ago, his Beatitude stated that he still maintained his resignation, but that he was in a somewhat anomalous position. He had recently received a letter from the Minister of Public Worship telling him that it had been noticed that he did not attend at the Patriarchate, where affairs were consequently in suspense, and directing him to resume his attendance there. The Patriarch had replied that his



Excellency had evidently overlooked the fact that he had received a letter from him tendering his resignation on certain grounds, and that he had not altered his decision. He recapitulated the reasons for his resignation, the chief of them being the irregular procedure adopted in the election of the Catholicos of Sis, the refusal of the Porte to execute the promises of the Sultan to remit the military exemption tax for Armenians, and the difficulties placed in the way of the free circulation of Armenians in the Empire.

His Beatitude said that he had received no reply to the letter, and on Easter Day he had not officiated at the Patriarchate, nor had he attended at the Palace on the occasion of Baïram to tender, as usual, his congratulations to the Sultan on behalf of the Armenians.

Mgr. Ormanian stated that the object of the Porte in declining to admit his legitimate right to exercise his supremacy in the election of the Catholicos of Sis is, as explained in Mr. de Bunsen's despatch No. 360 of the 18th June, 1898, to divide the Armenian nation and to curtail the powers of the Patriarchate: he felt sure that the Government would not be content with its success in the case of Sis, but would take similar steps for the independence of the Patriarch of Jerusalem and the Catholicos of Aghamar. The Patriarch of Constantinople had represented the Armenian nation in spiritual and temporal affairs since the arrival of the Turks in Constantinople. In consequence of the refusal of the Ottoman Government to allow him to use his legitimate and traditional influence in the appointment of the Catholicos of Sis, he no longer held that position, and he therefore felt compelled to maintain his resignation.

I should mention that M. Zinovieff, who left Constantinople a few weeks ago on leave of absence, called on M. Ormanian before his departure, and informed his Beatitude that Russia had decided not to press for the return to Turkey of the Armenian refugees in the Caucasus. His Excellency expressed interest in the question of the election of the Catholicos and in the Patriarch's resignation. He stated that he had always disapproved of the attitude of the late Prince Lobanoff with regard to the Armenians, and said that he would endeavour to persuade his Government that the proper policy for Russia was to support that nation and to assist them to obtain from the Turkish Government an improvement in their condition. In this connection I should mention that, in 1896, this Embassy had information that Russia wished to diminish the influence of the Patriarch of Constantinople and to make the Catholicos of Etchmiadzin the supreme authority of the Armenian nation, and I am inclined to think that the curtailment of the Patriarch's influence and the enhancement of the authority of the Catholicos of Sis would not be viewed with displeasure by the Russian Government.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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No. 45.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received April* 30.)

(No. 153. Confidential.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, April* 26, 1900.

THE telegrams which have recently appeared in the public press concerning the alleged determination of the United States' Government to require the immediate settlement of their claims against Turkey arising out of the Armenian massacres have caused much speculation at Constantinople as to the steps which may be necessary to enforce compliance with the American demand.

Mr. Griscom, the American Chargé d'Affaires, in the course of a visit which he paid me yesterday afternoon, was good enough to give me the following account of the more recent action of the United States in the matter.

Mr. Straus, the United States' Minister to the Porte, who is now on leave in America, was successful, before his departure from Constantinople, in obtaining from the Sultan several distinct promises that the American claim should be paid, and it appears that last autumn his Government had approved of a settlement by means of an overpayment which was to be made by the Ottoman Government for a cruiser to be built in the American yards. The arrangement was not kept on this side, and the order for a cruiser was abandoned. The Sultan is now endeavouring to resume it, and Ahmed Pasha, of the Ministry of Marine, who, on a former occasion, visited Messrs. Armstrong's works for a similar purpose, is under orders to proceed at once to New York and clench the bargain.

The United States' Government, however, are no longer in a mood to save the Sultan's feelings by accepting payment of their claims in this underhand fashion. Under instructions from Washington, Mr. Griscom sent in on the 24th instant a note declaring that the understanding of last year held good no longer, and was now unacceptable, and requiring direct payment of the sum due at once, as further delay would not be supported by his Government. He made a similar communication to the Palace.

So the matter stands at present. Mr. Griscom told me further that the German Ambassador had been at pains to point out to him that the consequences might be very serious, if the United States' Government pressed the Sultan too much. The German Military Attaché had also tried to frighten him by saying that coercive measures might possibly throw the Sultan into the arms of Russia, and bring to a head an Agreement placing Turkey under a Russian Protectorate in return for a guarantee of personal security for His Imperial Majesty.

I have already reported to your Lordship in my telegram No. 11, Commercial, of the 24th instant, the apprehensions which the prospect of America possibly appearing as a Naval Power in the Mediterranean has raised in the mind of the French Ambassador.

I thanked Mr. Griscom for calling upon me at this early stage of the negotiation and letting me know how matters stood. I told him, confidentially, that the action of his Government would probably compel the other Powers to press for a settlement of their massacre claims at the same time, and that it might even induce some of them to join in any action taken, rather than to see the United States make an unaided demonstration in the Mediterranean. Further than this I did not think that any Power would be likely to go.

I may add that the Sultan appears to be making efforts to conciliate the United States' Government by conceding several of their demands, which have hitherto met with no response. At an audience granted to the American Chargé d'Affaires last Friday, His Imperial Majesty informed him that he had issued an Iradé sanctioning the rebuilding of the ruined college at Kharput, and the addition of a new wing to Robert College on the Bosphorus. Leave has likewise been given to repair a school at Marsovan.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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No. 46.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received May* 1.)

(No. 155. Secret.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, April* 27, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship the figures of a telegram, dated the 26th instant, which I received this morning from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure in No. 46.

*Major Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(Telegraphic.) *Van, April* 26, 1900.

GOVERNMENT have news of proposed extensive revolutionary attack from Persia. Five important leaders from Russia have arrived at Salmas and are organizing bands. They intend crossing the frontier at three points: at Abagha, at Serai, and Albak as soon as roads are clear of snow, which may be at any time now. Frontier posts have been reinforced by troops from Van; no Europeans will be sent. Number of revolutionaries in each band unknown; probably about fifty.

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No. 47.

*Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received May* 2.)

(No. 93. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Vienna, April* 29, 1900.

I HAD some conversation with Count Goluchowski yesterday about affairs at Constantinople.

As regards the pretension of the Porte to raise the customs duties without previously obtaining the consent of the Powers, his Excellency said that the Turkish Government could never have seriously expected success in this attempt, and indeed he had heard that they had acted in the matter outside the Sultan, and had incurred His Majesty's displeasure in consequence. Count Goluchowski further observed, as he did the last time we talked over the subject, that the Turkish import duties could not be considered excessive, even with the proposed addition of 3 per cent., and that it probably would in the end be advisable to countenance the Porte in providing for itself some additional revenue from what seemed a legitimate source. Possibly some Concessions might be stipulated for in return on certain points connected with the Custom-house arrangements, which had long given the Powers a reasonable ground for complaint.

Count Goluchowski, on the other hand, thinks it would not be feasible, or indeed advisable, to mix up the question of payment for Armenian claims with this other affair. He considers that it would be next to impossible to procure concerted action about the indemnities. The claims of the various Powers differ a good deal to begin with (his Excellency here observed that the Austro-Hungarian claims are of no great importance), and other considerations came into play which, in his opinion, would make unanimity on the part of the Powers hopeless.

With reference to the pressure threatened by the United States' Government about their claims—which, I may observe, has excited a good deal of interest in this country, where the feeling against America has remained unfriendly ever since the war with Spain—Count Goluchowski confirmed the statement contained in the latest telegrams from Constantinople, that the note presented the other day by the United States' Chargé d'Affaires was not of the nature of an ultimatum. Nevertheless, his Excellency thinks that the menace of coercion might perhaps not be unwelcome to the Sultan. It would enable him to say that he had yielded in this instance only to force, and would give him a pretext for avoiding any admission of complicity in the Armenian troubles; this, next to impecuniosity, being his principal motive for shirking a settlement of the claims. He would likewise continue putting off the European Powers from whom, for want of complete agreement, no forcible measures were to be feared.

As to the attempt of the Sultan to divest himself of responsibility in this question, Count Goluchowski thought it absurd. Under the régime of the Capitulations—and this was their essential "raison d'être"—the Turkish Government could not but be held accountable for damage to subjects of foreign Powers resulting from the acts of its Agents.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

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No. 48.

*Sir C. Scott to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received May* 7.)

(No. 86. Commercial.)
My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, May* 3, 1900.

IN compliance with telegraphic instructions received from your Lordship on the 19th ultimo, I lost no time in inquiring whether the Russian Government shared the view of Her Majesty's Government, that the previous consent of the Powers was essential before the Ottoman Government could impose new or increased custom duties in its dominions.

As Count Mouravieff was unable to receive me on the 19th, a strict devotional day of Holy Week in the Eastern Church, I made this inquiry in a private letter to his Excellency, of which I have the honour to inclose copy. I also inclose copy of Count Mouravieff's reply, which is precisely similar to that returned to the inquiry which my Austrian and French colleagues were also instructed to address to him.

The Italian Ambassador also tells me that Count Mouravieff subsequently gave him the same answer, and that he had noted that his Excellency seemed somewhat reluctant to commit his Government to any engagement involving further pressure on the Sultan than was exercised in the collective note.

When I saw Count Mouravieff two days later, he had evidently received intelligence from Constantinople indicating the Sultan's intention to yield on the point of principle raised by the Powers in this question.

Speaking of the tension between the Governments of Washington and Constantinople in consequence of the Sultan's reluctance to settle the American money claim for the massacre of their missionaries, he said that it was unfortunate that Mr. Hay was pressing the immediate settlement of this claim in so peremptory a form—he supposed it was for electioneering reasons. The Sultan's reluctance, he added, was evidently owing to a conviction that other Powers who had much larger claims for similar indemnities would also press for immediate settlement, but that as Russia had no missionaries in Turkey she had no claims which he desired to press for immediate settlement at present.

My French colleague was good enough to show me the reports which he had just received from his Government on the latest phase of the American claim, in which some alarm was expressed at the possibility of the United States taking forcible action in the Mediterranean; the Marquis of Montebello had, however, received no instructions to take any action here on this information.

He said that he had spoken recently on the subject to Count Mouravieff, and had ascertained that his Excellency was doing all he could to counsel moderation equally at Washington and Constantinople, and to urge that neither Government should push matters to extremities.

Count Mouravieff had also mentioned to him that Russia had no desire to press any similar claim on the Sultan at this moment, and he thought that the Russian Government would not think it desirable to connect the question of any such claims with that of the customs duties.

The Marquis de Montebello also read to me a report from the French Ambassador at Washington, which said that although some such action as forcible measures at Smyrna had been mentioned as possible in the case of persistent refusal on the part of the Sultan, Mr. Hay had assured him that no coercive measures were at present in contemplation, nor had the demand been accompanied by any such threats.

Yesterday Count Mouravieff told me that he had every reason to believe that the incident would terminate in a conciliatory and fair settlement.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES S. SCOTT.

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Inclosure 1 in No. 48.

*Sir C. Scott to Count Mouravieff.*

My dear Count Mouravieff, *British Embassy, April* 6 (19), 1900.

AS to-morrow is Good Friday and I shall probably not be back from church in time to call upon you at 12 o'clock, I write these few lines to say that the matter about which I wished to see you was the apparent persistence of the Porte in its attitude respecting the increase of customs duty on the 1st (14th) May.

Our Ambassador at Constantinople reports the opinion expressed at the meeting of the Ambassadors when replying to the last note of the Porte, that the Ottoman Government is persisting in its attitude, under the impression that the Powers will not come to any common agreement, and that it would be advisable to make serious representations to the Turkish Ambassadors in the different capitals, and for the respective Governments to consult together as to the steps to be taken in a matter of such general and great interest.

I am therefore instructed to ask you whether the Imperial Government share the view of Her Majesty's Government, that it is essential that before new or increased duties can be imposed by the Ottoman Government, the previous consent of the Powers should be obtained.

Sir Nicholas O'Conor reports that your Ambassador has been instructed to oppose the levy of the proposed new duty on petroleum and corn, on the ground that it would be higher on these articles than under the specific tariff, and the same argument applies



to a good many important articles of British trade, and he is of opinion that the Capitulations will lose all force if the Ottoman Government is allowed to levy these duties without the previous consent of the Powers.

Can you let me know the view of your Government on this point, so that I can reply by telegraph to Lord Salisbury.

I avail, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES S. SCOTT.

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Inclosure 2 in No. 48.

*Count Mouravieff to Sir C. Scott.*

M. l'Ambassadeur, *Saint-Pétersbourg, le* 6 (19) *Avril*, 1900

EN réponse à la lettre que vous avez bien voulu m'adresser en date d'aujourd'hui au sujet de l'intention manifestée par la Sublime Porte d'élever, à partir du 14 Mai prochain, les droits de douane actuellement en vigueur, je m'empresse de vous informer que le point de vue du Governement Russe dans cette question est parfaitement conforme à celui des autres Puissances, comme en témoigne la participation de l'Ambassadeur de Russie à Constantinople à la note collective des Représentants en date du 25 Mars (7 Avril), année courante, adressée au Ministre Ottoman des Affaires Étrangères.

Veuillez, &c.
(Signé) Comte MOURAVIEFF.

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No. 49.

*Sir C. Scott to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received May* 11.)

(No. 121. Confidential.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, May 5*, 1900.

M. ZINOVIEFF, the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople, was good enough to call on me a few days after his arrival in St. Petersburgh on leave.

In the course of conversation, I learned from his Excellency that he regarded the pressure being exerted on the Sultan by the United States' Government for the immediate payment of the indemnity for the massacre of American missionaries as unfortunate, for although the sum was not a very large one for the Ottoman Government to pay, he thought the Sultan could not at present find money to satisfy the much larger claims which other Powers would press for somewhat similar indemnities.

He seemed to deprecate the idea which some of the Ambassadors at Constantinople had entertained of pressing these claims in connection with the negotiation about new customs duties, which he thought presented no very serious difficulty, and said that Russia had certainly a claim, though not a very large one, for similar indemnities, but that it was not desired to press for its immediate settlement.

M. Zinovieff said that the present tension between Washington and Constantinople must not be allowed to assume a dangerous character.

My Austrian colleague, who also received a visit from M. Zinovieff, tells me that he understands that his Excellency's tenure of the Embassy at Constantinople had lately been rather insecure owing to hostile influences in the Russian Foreign Office, and to the desire in certain quarters at St. Petersburgh to give this post to M. Mouravieff, the present Minister of Justice, who finds himself in strong disagreement with M. de Witte on the subject of the pending trial of influential persons implicated in recent railway and financial scandals.

The success of M. Zinovieff's recent negotiations with the Porte on the question of railway concessions appears, however, to have rendered his position more secure, and the rumour of M. Mouravieff being likely to be given a foreign Embassy has been denied in official quarters.

Baron d'Aehrenthal, who has seen the final text of the Railway Arrangement concluded by M. Zinovieff, informs me that the most remarkable feature in it is that the Agreement concerns ("les parages de la Mer Noire") the districts of the Black Sea, and not exclusively those in Asia Minor.

Although not distinctly stated in the Agreement, the fundamental point on which the Russian Government appears to have insisted as a basis for negotiating the Agree-

ment was the admission by the Sultan that the Black Sea was exclusively a Russian and Turkish Sea, and that no new railway concessions should be given in districts adjoining it in territories under Turkish sovereignty or suzerainty to any other foreign Governments or Companies than Russian.

Under this Agreement, Baron d'Aehrenthal went on to say Russia might easily acquire an exclusive right to construct a railway through Bulgaria direct to Constantinople.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES S. SCOTT.

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No. 50.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 14.)*

(No. 164.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, May 5, 1900.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Beirout, on the subject of the proposed formation of German Colonies in Syria.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure in No. 50.

*Consul-General Drummond-Hay to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 25.)
Sir, *Beirout, April 26, 1900.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that, according to reports which I have received from the Acting Vice-Consul at Haifa, arrangements are being made for the establishment of two new German Colonies, one near Haifa and the other near Jaffa. Dr. Haufmann of Jerusalem, President of a German Colonization Society, is negotiating for the purchase of the land required for the former. Should he be unable to obtain this land, it is said that the intention is to form the Colony in the Hauran, if the railway is to be built.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. DRUMMOND-HAY.

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No. 51.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 28.)*

(No. 173.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, May 19, 1900.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 142 of the 22nd March last year, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copies of two despatches which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Adana, reporting on the present state of the Armenian relief works at Hadjin, and commenting on the good political effect produced by them.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure 1 in No. 51.

*Major Massy to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 10.)
Sir, *Adana, April 28, 1900.*

DURING my recent passage through Constantinople your Excellency was so good as to express satisfaction at the manner in which the relief works at Hadjin had been organized by us. It is with all the more pleasure, therefore, that I submit the following



report on the present state of these works, as well as on the good resulting to Hadjin and neighbourhood from their institution.

I would desire, first, to observe that the position of Hadjin, removed some five or six days' journey from the coast, and situated in the midst of the wild Taurus Mountains, with an almost entirely Christian population of some 12,000 to 15,000 souls, rendered this town a mark for the fanaticism and hate of the Turks during the troubles of four years ago. Had it not been for the Rev. J. C. Martin's presence and for my frequent journeys to that district, there can be but little doubt that a massacre on a large scale would have occurred. In spite of all our efforts, even, the whole Christian population was reduced to beggary, and without any means of gaining a livelihood. The problem was a serious one which confronted me on my arrival four years ago.

Relief funds were already low; the Hadjin Christians were starving and hemmed into the town, whence they feared to move. We have had but some 1,300*l.* to distribute to some 20,000 people, all more or less in want. To commence to give to these where all would ask, even the least needy, would mean to expend all the funds at our disposal within a week. I concerted, therefore, with Mr. Martin, with the following result: Ploughs, oxen, seed, &c., were provided for the villagers, whom I conducted back from Hadjin with a guarantee from the Government that they should not be molested. In some cases we had to renew the woodwork of the houses burnt during the disturbances.

I made the vilayet responsible for the safety of the roads, along none of which could a Christian travel in safety, many of them being muleteers and reduced almost to starvation owing to their state of practical imprisonment within the town.

For the town population relief works were started, weaving cotton and woollen stuffs, carpets, and rugs, a carpenter's shop, flour mill, and other industries, in which the poorest were employed. Women and children received their share in this. The very necessitous, who were too ill or too old to work, were relieved from the profits of our works. Others were taken in and taught a trade, after which they were set up in their own houses as weavers, carpenters, or in other pursuits.

We obtained a good piece of land, then cheap, and built thereon two buildings, now the best in Hadjin. This property, if now sold, would realize more than the whole sum originally intrusted to us. We brought from England several machines, millstones, &c., which simplify labour and return a good profit. We have, in fact, sunk the small funds at our disposal as a capital, and therewith have given inestimable relief, while increasing our funds in hand. Thus, the poor have worked for their bread instead of becoming professional beggars.

The following particulars show how our works stand at present:—

Our funds in hand for current expenses are nil. In fact, we owe some 340 liras. This debt has caused us some anxiety, so that we propose paying it off by the sale of a portion of our stuffs in hand at a slightly reduced price.

I do not know whether a special appeal at home might raise for us some subscriptions, however small, which might be sent to Mr. Martin.

We stand now as follows:—

| In hand— | Liras. |
|---|---|
| Looms, machinery, fire-extinguisher, and utensils .. .. .. | 100 |
| Cotton stuffs, woven: sold, payment not yet due .. .. .. | 184 |
| „ „ in stock, not yet sold .. .. .. .. | 192 |
| Cotton yarn in hand .. .. .. .. .. .. | 198 |
| Woollen yarn in hand .. .. .. .. .. .. | 36 |
| Rugs in stock, about .. .. .. .. .. .. | 75 |
| „ sent to England, about .. .. .. .. .. | 65 |
| Lumber, dyes, &c. .. .. .. .. .. .. | 5 |
| Total .. .. .. .. .. .. | 855 |
| Deduct liabilities .. .. .. .. .. .. | 340 |
| Total value of stock in hand .. .. .. .. | 515 |

That is, over 460*l.*

This estimate is made purposely a low one.

As we never disposed of more than 300 liras for stock—all other funds going to purchase land and buildings for our works—we have carried on relief to thousands, and have now more than half as much again as our original stock capital. The buildings and land have also increased in value, so that we dispose of now considerably more than was originally intrusted to us. Besides feeding many hungry families, we have taught

remunerative trades; we still employ daily some 200 people, which means some 200 families honestly gaining a livelihood, raising all we have employed from a degrading state of pauperism.

All the workpeople now employed we have ourselves trained, except two professional weavers and one dyer. All the original instructors have been discharged, sufficient skill having been developed to carry on the various departments.

The following quotation from a report just received from Hadjin speaks for itself:—

"One can safely affirm that the condition of Hadjin is at least 100 per cent. better than when relief works were started. The change, of course, is not altogether due to our industries, but a large part of it is. I reckon that the industries give out not less than 500 liras per annum, chiefly in wages. 2,000 liras are annually expended on institutions for fatherless and motherless children here. These two institutions together have, directly and indirectly, made a new town of Hadjin. In addition to this, about 1,000 liras are expended annually by the missionaries for schools, churches, and their private expenses."

With this I conclude, begging your Excellency's indulgence for so lengthy a report, but feeling sure that this account of our efforts will be read with interest.

I have, &c.

(Signed) P. H. H. MASSY,
*Her Majesty's Vice-Consul.*

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Inclosure 2 in No. 51.

*Major Massy to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 11.)

Sir, *Adana, April 28, 1900.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 10 of this date on our relief works at Hadjin, I find that there is one important point to which I omitted to allude, namely, the political effect of these institutions.

Your Excellency is aware that it has not been necessary for me to refer any point for decision or protest to Constantinople. There have been, from time to time, subjects which have arisen requiring a settlement with the Turkish Government. I am glad to be able to inform your Excellency that all such questions I have been able to arrange locally, without having recourse to higher authority. I have been thanked, moreover, for the establishment of these institutions, and for our philanthropy, by officials of all grades. The late Wali of Adana, Hussein Hilmi Pasha, assured me of the gratitude of the Turkish Government, saying: "So long as all relief institutions are managed in Turkey on the same lines as yours, and with the same tact, this Government can have but one feeling towards them, and that is one of gratitude."

I have carefully observed the effect of our work, and I can affirm that, politically, it has been beneficial in going far to prove to this Government that England's intentions in aiding the Armenians are purely philanthropic, with no concealed ideas behind them.

I have, &c.

(Signed) P. H. H. MASSY,
*Her Majesty's Vice-Consul.*

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No. 52.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received May 28.*)

(No. 174.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, May 19, 1900.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 155, Secret, of the 27th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting that Armenian revolutionists are proposing to make attacks simultaneously at three different points on the frontier.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure in No. 52.

*Major Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 18.)

Sir, *Van, April 26, 1900.*

I HAVE the honour to report that the Government here has reliable information of a proposed extensive attack by Armenian revolutionists from the side of the Persian frontier. Five important leaders of the "Hunchak" section have left Russia and repaired to Salmas in Persia, where they are organizing bands of revolutionaries at Haftwan and Melhami, close to that place.

I have known for some time past of the presence of a considerable number of revolutionaries in Salmas, but they have been without definite organization, and have been quiet during the winter.

Subsequently, it is proposed to cross the Turkish frontier at three points simultaneously, viz.: into Abagha, where the small party crossed last autumn, by the Serai route, and into the Albak district, near Bashkala, where their attack was made last spring on Sheref Bey, the Kurdish Chief there.

The frontier posts have been reinforced by regular troops and zaptiehs from here, and attacks are expected as soon as the roads are clear of snow, which may be any time now.

In answer to my inquiries, I am told that arrangements have been specially made that only regular troops and zaptiehs should be employed, and, if possible, no Hamidié will be used; or, if they are, they will be kept under the control of regular officers to obviate pillage and attacks on innocent Christian villages.

The town of Van seems perfectly clear of revolutionists at present.

I have had the honour of acquainting your Excellency of the substance of the above by telegraph.

I have, &c.

(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

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No. 53.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received May 28.*)

(No. 175. Confidential.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, May 19, 1900.*

I LEARN on good authority that a scheme is on foot according to which the increased revenue to be derived from the augmented import duty is to be appropriated to guaranteeing a loan of some £ T. 20,000,000 for the construction of the Bagdad railway.

The idea appears to be that the new specific tariff will bring in an increase of £ T. 1,500,000 a-year. Of this £ T. 300,000 would go to the public debt in the interest of the foreign bondholders, and the balance of £ T. 1,200,000, would defray the annual interest of the loan at 6 per cent. with sinking fund and other expenses.

The railway would, by this means, become the property of the Imperial Ottoman Government, the construction and administration of the line remaining, however, in the hands of the Anatolian Railway Company. It is thought that a loan secured on the Customs will entice foreign, and especially British, capitalists, to subscribe more readily than if the loan were merely secured on the tithes revenue. A fixed proportion of the total sum has been already reserved under existing arrangements for the French investor, and a part of the remainder can be similarly apportioned to the British market, both France and England obtaining a share in the work of construction.

This plan has been devised by a well-known French financier of Constantinople, M. Bardac, by name, and is now under the consideration of Dr. Zander, the Director of the Anatolian Railway Company, who has come here from Berlin for the purpose. It has been submitted to the Sultan in the hope, doubtless, that His Imperial Majesty will be attracted by the idea of the property of the line passing into the hands of his Government, and by the further prospect that if the Bagdad scheme succeeds, a similar project can be made for bringing the railways of Northern Asia Minor under the Turkish control, not withstanding the preferential rights recently accorded to the Russians.

On the other hand, this proposal, if adopted, would necessarily diminish the Customs revenues upon which the Sultan could draw for the requirements of the Palace. But as

it would not come into full force for some years, it is hoped that this consideration will not outweigh the satisfaction that His Imperial Majesty would derive from the reflection that the railway had become the property of the Ottoman Government.

The estimate of the increase of revenue to be obtained from the specific tariff is possibly exaggerated, but if so, it is said that the Customs and Fisheries Loans can be converted to make up the deficiency.

The project is, for the moment, being kept very secret. Efforts are being made to induce the Sultan to appoint a Commission to examine it, under the Presidency of Selim Melhame Pasha, Minister of Mines and Forests, whose sympathy and interest in the matter it will be the object of the German financiers to secure by every means in their power.

From a political point of view there is strong reason for the proposal meeting with the favour and support of the German Government. If the Bagdad Railway becomes the property of the Ottoman Government, the friction between Germany and Russia will be in a certain degree reduced, and instead of Germany appearing as the supporter of a German Railway Company in Turkey, her intervention at any time will be on behalf of a Turkish enterprise equally advantageous to all Western countries.

It would not be well to lose sight of the effect which this arrangement, if carried out, might have on the Koweit question.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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## No. 54.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 28.)*

(No. 177.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, May 22, 1900.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copies of two despatches which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, reporting that disturbances have broken out between the Kurdish tribe of Sor and the Hamidiehs in the Djezireh district.

I have caused an unofficial communication on the subject to be made to the Grand Vizier.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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### Inclosure 1 in No. 54.

*Vice-Consul Jones to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 9.)
Sir, *Diarbekir, February 27, 1900.*

I HAVE the honour to report that hostilities have broken out between the Kurdish tribe of Sor and the Hamidiehs in the district of Djezireh, which threaten to develop into a serious revolt.

The details of the affair, according to information brought to me last night, are as follows:—

About a fortnight ago Fetta Agha and his brother Tahir Agha, a son-in-law of Mustapha Pasha, the Colonel of the Hamidiehs in that region, carried off and imprisoned a native Christian, a dependent of Mohammed Aghai Sor, of the village of Sharnak, who, by way of retaliation, sent his retainers to seize and detain three Moslem dependents of Tahir Agha, and then sent word to the latter that unless the Christian in question were released the Moslems would be detained in captivity; whereupon Tahir Agha set the Christian free, the Agha Mohammed giving up his three prisoners.

On hearing of this act of Mohammed Agha's, Mustapha Pasha sent a band of men of the Tayan tribe with orders to attack and plunder a camp of the Hawaris, a Yezideh tribe subject to the authority of Mohammed Aghai Sor, and these orders were so effectually carried out that but few escaped to tell of the massacre of their fellow tribesmen by the followers of Mustapha Pasha, who, after killing all the men they could find and burning the tents, threw the dead bodies into the Tigris, and finally drove before them the flocks of the tribe thus treacherously murdered. Mohammed Aghai Sor,



enraged at the news of this outrage, assembled a band of his followers to the number of about 2,000, armed with rifles, to attack the tribe that had carried out these sanguinary orders of their Chief, Mustapha Pasha.

I have the honour to add that the latest news received was to the effect that the Kaïmakam of Djezireh, on receiving word of the Agha Mohammed design, had started with a body of troops for the defence of the threatened Tayan tribe.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. F. JONES.

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### Inclosure 2 in No. 54.

*Vice-Consul Jones to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 16.)
Sir, *Diarbekir, May 8, 1900.*

WITH reference to the enmity existing between the Hamidieh troops and the Kurdish tribe of Sor, reported in my despatch No 9. of the 27th February last, I have the honour to report that, according to information received lately, it appears that a fortnight ago hostilities again broke out between them, the Hamidiehs, under Mustapha Pasha's orders, having attacked and burnt down at least twenty villages in the Silupi section of the Djezireh district, besides killing off more than a hundred of the tribesmen.

It is said that Mohammed Agha, the Chief of the Sor tribe, has addressed a Petition by telegraph to His Majesty the Sultan, asking for protection against their assailants.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. F. JONES.

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## No. 55.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 28.)*

(No. 180.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, May 22, 1900.*

THE accompanying despatches, No. 28 from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus reporting the visit of M. Gorémykine to that city, and No. 34 from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Beirout, reporting the Russianizing of two Greek Orthodox schools at Lattakia, show that the spread of Russian influence in Syria continues to make progress.

In my despatch No. 83, Confidential, of the 14th March, I took occasion to remark that the loss of French prestige through the active propaganda of Russia was not passing unobserved by M. Constans, and the establishment by Jesuits of a medical school at Beirout, reported by Mr. Drummond Hay in his despatch No. 33 of the 7th instant, copy of which is herewith inclosed, is no doubt a counter-move to Russian scholastic activity.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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### Inclosure 1 in No. 55.

*Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 28.)
Sir, *Damascus, April 26, 1900.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that his Excellency M. J. Gorémykine, Russian Senator, Privy Councillor, and ex-Minister of the Interior, arrived in Damascus on the 19th instant, and left again for Beirout yesterday, the 25th instant.

M. Gorémykine, who was travelling with his wife and son, was met, on his arrival at the station here, by the Russian Consul-General and his staff, the Dragoman of the vilayet, sent for that purpose by the Vali, and a guard of honour, the same ceremonial being observed on the occasion of his departure.

In the course of his stay here he inspected the Greek—read "Russian"—schools, and had an interview with the Greek Orthodox Patriarch, who, I hear, received him with very great honour.

It may be only a coincidence, but it is a curious fact that during the last year more Russian travellers of distinction have visited Damascus than has ever been the case before, the example being set, so to speak, by M. Anitchkoff, who, as reported in my despatches Nos. 20 and 26 of the 5th and 15th April, 1899, respectively, inspected all the Greek schools in this vilayet, and received very marked official attentions wherever he went.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

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Inclosure 2 in No. 55.

*Consul-General Drummond Hay to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 33.)
Sir, *Beirout, May* 7, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to report that the Society of Jesus have lately purchased a large site on the Damascus road at the entrance to Beirout, on which to build a medical school in connection with their University here.

The school will comprise a Pasteur institute for diphtheria and hydrophobia, and it is said that the French Government has voted 1,000,000 fr. in support of these institutions.

The site has been walled, but the work of building has not yet been begun.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. DRUMMOND HAY.

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Inclosure 3 in No. 55.

*Consul-General Drummond Hay to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 34.)
Sir, *Beirout, May* 7, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to report that M. Tarassof, Inspector of Russian Schools at Tripoli, recently visited Lattakia to take over two Orthodox schools (boys and girls) for the "Société Russe des Écoles de Palestine," the Orthodox community being unable to maintain them itself.

I am informed that these schools will now teach Russian, Arabic, the Orthodox catechism, and either Turkish or French.

Small schools of the same nature are also to be opened in the Tripoli district, and M. Tarassof will probably then proceed on a similar mission to Antioch.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. DRUMMOND HAY.

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No. 56.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received June 4.)*

(No. 191.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, May* 28, 1900.

A RECENT issue of the Constantinople papers contained the announcement that the Commission for Armenian Reforms, having visited every part of Anatolia and put the reforms into execution, had terminated its labours.

This measure has been brought about by the recent death at Trebizond of Marshal Shakir Pasha, High Commissioner of the Ottoman Government and President of the above Commission. The remaining members of the Commission were recalled to Constantinople.

The Permanent Commission of Control, which was set up at the capital in 1895 to watch over the execution of the measures of reform, ceased long ago to hold any



meetings, and with the dissolution of the wandering body which was to restore harmony in Asia Minor disappears the last pretence of carrying out the scheme.

Shakir Pasha's Commission served only to impoverish still further the provinces he visited. A few minor points, such as the creation of "Mouavins," or assistants to the Governors, which never had any influence for good, have alone been carried out, and it is no exaggeration to say that the reforms of 1895, like so many others promulgated from the time of the Hatt-i-Sherif onwards, have remained a dead letter.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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No. 57.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received June 4.)*

(No. 194. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, May* 30, 1900.

IN my despatch No. 152, Confidential, of the 26th ultimo, I mentioned that the Russian Ambassador had lately taken an unwonted interest in the resignation of the Armenian Patriarch, and had informed his Beatitude that he was advocating at St. Petersburgh a policy of support and encouragement towards the Armenian people in their difficulties with the Turkish Government. Russia, indeed, had decided, he said, to abandon her demand for the repatriation of the Armenians now of the districts of the Caucasus into Turkey.

There is much significance in this sudden reversal of the attitude of indifference so long maintained by M. Nélidow in regard to the sufferings of the Armenians, and it is perhaps not unreasonable to connect this new-born solicitude for their welfare with the privileged position recently secured by Russia in Northern Asia Minor, which would naturally make her desirous of securing the good wishes of the Armenian population.

The Russian Ambassador has recently made representations at the Porte protesting against the demeanour of the Ottoman authorities towards the persecuted Armenian villagers, and I learn that he followed them up on the 21st instant by a formal note. Mr. Block, who has since had a private opportunity of seeing this document, gives the following account of its contents:—

It refers to the preceding notes of the 29th November, 1899, and the 13th February, 1900, which called the Porte's serious attention to the vexatious measures of the local authorities in the frontier provinces of Asia Minor, which were driving the Armenians to cross the Russian border, and the absolute necessity of adopting the necessary measures to put an end to these "agissements vexatoires." It states that these notes have remained unanswered, and that the deplorable state of the country is still the same, whilst the local authorities instead of endeavouring to prevent the emigration of Armenians to Russia, seemed by their conduct to rather desire to encourage and facilitate the same.

It refers to the difficulties raised by Ottoman Consuls with regard to the *visa* of Armenians, Turkish subjects wishing to return to Turkey, these being other than the peasants who fled during the disturbances and who are now being settled in the Caucasus in accordance with the Arrangement concluded between the Porte and the Russian Government.

The note insists strongly upon the necessity of instructing Consular officials no longer to raise difficulties, in regard to the return of those Armenians, as also of instructing the frontier officials not to oppose their return, and it concludes with the following remarkable passage:—

"Il va sans dire que tout retard apporté par la Sublime Porte pour l'adoption de ces mesures pourrait entraîner les conséquences les plus graves, dont votre Excellence est à même d'apprécier la portée, et obligeant le Gouvernement Impérial d'aviser pour son compte aux moyens propres à sauvegarder ses intérêts."

The tone of the above note and the threat with which it concludes have caused considerable annoyance at the Porte, and its effect may perhaps be perceived in the withdrawal some days ago by the Armenian Patriarch of his resignation. His Beatitude was induced to take this step by the receipt of very definite promises from the Sultan. His Imperial Majesty acknowledges by Iradé the Patriarch's complete control over all Armenians in Turkey, including the Archbishopric of Sis. He grants the removal of difficulties hitherto caused to Armenians travelling in the Empire; and he orders the complete

remission of the military exemption tax arrears, the collection of which had been adjourned, and promises facilities in the manner of its payment in future.

It seems probable that these concessions were made in consequence of the new attitude assumed by Russia on the Armenian question.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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No. 58.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received June* 18.)

(No. 195.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, June* 4, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, reporting the discovery and arrest of a gang of coiners in that city.

Your Lordship will observe that two members of the gang are sons of a former Dragoman of the Consulate.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure in No. 58.

*Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 35.)
Sir, *Damascus, May* 19, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency the arrest here a few days ago of a gang of coiners, two of the principal members of which, Nassib Effendi Kwzberi and Saïd Effendi Muneyyir, belong to two of the most well-to-do and respected Moslem families of this city, while two others, Christians named Kaissar and Tewfik Missk respectively, are sons of a certain Hannah Missk, who was formerly Dragoman to this Consulate.

The incident has caused considerable excitement and astonishment here, chiefly on account of the social position and, relatively speaking, wealth of the Moslem criminals above mentioned, neither of whom would appear to have any motive whatever for engaging in so felonious and dangerous an enterprise.

The young Christians referred to, though belonging to what is generally considered a respectable family, had notoriously extravagant, not to say vicious, tastes, for the satisfaction of which they did not possess adequate means, so that their culpability does not excite so much surprise.

Kaissar Missk was arrested in the harem of Saïd Effendi Muneyyir's house, where also was found a bag containing 100 false medjidiés, as well as all the necessary coining plant which, I am informed, is of a very superior description, evidently made in Europe.

Nine arrests have been made so far, and others are talked of as impending.

It is hinted that this coining has been going on for some years past, and that the authorities had good reasons for suspecting its existence without being able to lay their hands on the guilty persons. Others aver that had not the latter been well-to-do and influential they would have been arrested long ago!

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

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No. 59.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received June* 18.)

(No. 201.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, June* 6, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting that a party of Herki and Zebari Kurds have made an unprovoked attack on the Nestorian Christians of the district of Salabakka, south-east of Tiari.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure in No. 59.

*Major Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.*

Sir, *Van, May* 23, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to report that an unprovoked outrage was committed on the Nestorian Christians of the district of Salabakka lying south-east of Tiari, on the other side of the Great Zab, and situated on the extreme border of the Van Vilayet.

The sheep of Ugri, a village of some 60 houses in Salabakka, were raided by a party of Herki and Zebari Kurds; they carried off first the sheep, and then attacked and plundered Ugri and its neighbours Maliktha, Bebaluk, and Dergini, all of them Christian, and the two Kurdish villages of Kuriku and Biawi.

They killed twenty-one persons altogether, shepherds and inhabitants, outraged several women, killed some small boys, abducted some female children, and cut in pieces a woman and her child.

A Kaïmakam of the Mosul district resides at Zebar, the centre of the district, while the Herki Kurds occupy the villages north of Zebar, partly in the Van and partly in the Mosul Vilayet.

The raid seems to have been known of by people of Amadia beforehand, and may have been joined by some of them. A Kurd was sent from Amadia to warn the Salabakka shepherds, and he was among the killed during the attack. The Kaïmakams of Julamerk and Shemsdinan, both in the Van Vilayet, have sent a small body of troops towards Salabakka, but the raiders have retired into the Mosul Vilayet, and it rests with the authorities there to effect their capture. I have heard they have sent a battalion from Mosul for that purpose, but no result of their action is known by the authorities here.

Another minor and less inhuman outrage has also occurred in the same region. Some Oramar Kurds carried off the sheep of the Syrian village of Arbush, in Tkhuma, whereupon the latter called upon some Hartoshi Kurds to assist them, and they together recovered the sheep, losing three of their number and killing one Oramar Kurd and wounding others.

The Oramar Kurds then sent down to Tkhuma offering to make peace, and asking the Tkhuma men to join with them against their late allies the Hartoshi. This offer was refused, whereupon both the Oramar and Hartoshi sent to a local Chief, the Agha of Chal, to arrange terms of peace, which was eventually done.

This latter affair will, I think, show to your Excellency the very crude and ignorant state of society prevailing in these mountains, and how some of these attacks have their origin.

The conduct of the Christians has been exemplary, and there has been no provocation on their part to these outrages; they had previously been warned by Mar Shimun on that point.

The reason for the Salabakka outrage seems to be simply plunder, but there are reports that Sheikh Sadik instigated them both, but I have not yet found any confirmation of these.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. R. MAUNSELL.

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## No. 60.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received June* 11.)

(No. 202.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, June* 6, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 519 of the 8th November, 1899, I have the honour to transmit copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting that the Nestorians of the plain of Urmia, who last year embraced the Orthodox faith, are dissatisfied with their new religion, and suggesting that a sum of 200*l.* might be provided to be employed in the work of reconverting them.

I have informed Major Maunsell that I consider that co-operation of the kind suggested with the efforts of the missionaries to reconvert these people would be impracticable and undesirable, as even supposing that means were forthcoming for pursuing such a policy, it would be sure to provoke retaliatory measures of proselytism on the part of Russia against which we should have but little chance of success.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure in No. 60.

*Major Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 21.)
Sir, *Van, May* 14, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to report that I hear the Nestorians, who last year joined the Orthodox Church in the Urmia plain, are extremely dissatisfied with their new religion and the Russian priests, and realize that the promises of Russian protection held out to them on joining are more or less visionary.

A fair number of Nestorians are in Tergavvar, close to the Turkish frontier, and about 100 families in the Urmia plain, who have not become Orthodox and retain their old faith. From what I hear, it is quite possible to induce a large number, if not all those who became Orthodox, to return to their former religion.

I am endeavouring, with the aid of Mr. Browne, to organize a plan to this end, and get some energetic priests who will act as emissaries of Mar Shimun, and win the people back. There are two such priests who have already done much to prevent all their people becoming Orthodox, and may be counted on for further work.

If your Excellency could obtain a sum of 200*l.*, I venture to submit that I could employ it, through Mr. Browne, to considerable effect in furthering the above object. In conversation with the Vali, I mentioned the outline of the above idea, and he was extremely pleased, as there is no doubt that the presence of these Orthodox Nestorians has been causing the Turkish Government much anxiety, and he promised any possible assistance.

I may mention that recently a few Armenians of this town approached the Dragoman of the Russian Consulate (the Consul being absent), with a view to becoming Orthodox, and thus obtaining Russian protection.

They received no definite reply, but were told to wait until the newly appointed Consul arrived.

With reference to my despatch No. 19 of the 2nd May, regarding the attempted strangling of the Kaïmakam of Shemsdinan by Sheikh Mehmed Sadik's men, I now hear that one of the Kaïmakam's assailants has been captured and has "died" in prison.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

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## No. 61.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received June* 18.)

(No. 206. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, June* 13, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of an interesting despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Jerusalem, reporting a rumour that the Sultan has offered the post of Grand Marshal of the Palace, recently held by the late Ghazi Osman Pasha, to Djevad Pasha, Commander-in-chief of the Army Corps at Damascus.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure in No. 61.

*Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 38. Confidential.)
Sir, *Damascus, May* 30, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that I hear, from what I believe to be a reliable source, that the Sultan has quite recently contemplated making the offer of—if indeed he has not actually offered—the post of Mushir of the Mabeyn (Grand Marshal of the Palace) to Djevad Pasha, the Commander-in-chief of this Army Corps, in succession to the late Ghazi Osman Pasha.

I know that Djevad Pasha, who is seriously, not to say dangerously, ill with pneumonia, the result of a severe attack of influenza, has received two very sympathetically worded and kindly telegrams from His Imperial Majesty, asking for news of his health.

His brother, Lieutenant-General Shakir Pasha (Aide-de-camp to the Sultan and Member of the Military Commission of Inspection), who is staying with him, tells me that Djevad Pasha was recently asked by the Sultan, through the post, for his candid opinion on the projected Damascus–Mecca Railway, and that his reply was most distinctly unfavourable to that scheme, which he pronounced to be not only impracticable, but injurious to the true interests of the Empire.

Shakir Pasha added that this frankness on his brother's part had not, he had good reason to believe, provoked the Imperial displeasure, but rather the contrary.

I cannot, of course, guarantee Shakir Pasha's veracity, but he appeared to be telling what he believed to be the truth.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

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## No. 62.

*The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 120.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, June* 20, 1900.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 202 of the 6th instant relative to the suggestion of Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, that a sum of 200*l.* should be provided in order to assist the reconversion of the Nestorians of the Urmia Plain who have recently joined the Orthodox Church.

I approve your Excellency's reply to Major Maunsell as reported in your despatch.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

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## No. 63.

*Mr. Spring-Rice to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received June* 25.)

(No. 51. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Tehran, May* 30, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that Prince Borghese, who has been staying with the German Consul at Bagdad on his way to Tehran, told me that he had met the party of German engineers who were surveying with a view to the extension of the Anatolian Railway. They assured him that the railway could not possibly pay its promoters unless the Sultan guaranteed the payment of interest on the shares. There was hardly enough merchandize carried by all the caravans which passed between Bagdad and the west to make one train-load a week. They also told him that Koweit was to be the terminus of the line, "if the English allowed it," and that a port at Koweit was an essential part of the scheme.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CECIL SPRING-RICE.

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## No. 64.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received June* 25.)

(No. 212.)
My Lord. *Constantinople, June* 19, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatches No. 20 of the 18th January and No. 201 of the 6th instant, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith extract of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting on recent events in the Nestorian country. It would appear from this despatch that order is being to some extent restored, and that Mar Shimum's influence has been increased among his own people.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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### Inclosure in No. 64.

*Major Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 25.)
(Extract.) *Van, June* 4, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to report that the question of the Tiari raid into Lewin, referred to in despatch of the 2nd ultimo, has now been satisfactorily arranged. The "Mektubji" of Van, Kesvi Bey, has completed his inquiry at Julamerk, and the fourteen Nestorian prisoners have been released by order of the Sultan.

This will certainly have an excellent effect on the Christians, and will also greatly enhance Mar Shimum's influence among his people, as he has been living in Julamerk for some time in view of the inquiry, and has been doing his best in the matter.

The differences between the Julamerk Kurds and the Christians of Tiari and neighbouring districts have now been arranged, and it is hoped that the latter will now be able to bring their produce to the Julamerk market, which they have hitherto been afraid to do.

The Kaïmakam of Julamerk, who had got under the influence of the local Kurds, has been removed to another part of the vilayet, together with some minor officials, and probably now, with a new Kaïmakam, matters will take a more peaceful turn. The late Mutessarif of Hekkiari collected last autumn from the Christian districts of Jelu and Baz at least twice the proper amount of tribute due from them, and the Vali promised me that these districts will remain exempt this year.

As regards the more recent raid on Salabakka, the Kaïmakam of Shemsdinan made an effort to cut off some parties of Herki Kurds, with some of the raided sheep,



on their way to summer pastures on the mountains on the Persian frontier, but they managed to pass the frontier, and it was considered inadvisable to pursue.

The Vali tells me he proposes to capture all their sheep, on their return in August, at a certain narrow pass in the mountains favourable for the purpose.

Of the main body of the raiders from Zebari and Amadia in Mosul Vilayet no information can be obtained from here, but I learnt that troops had left Mosul to punish them.

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## No. 65.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received July* 2.)

(No. 219.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, June* 26, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, reporting on the state of lawlessness existing in districts comparatively near that city.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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### Inclosure in No. 65.

*Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 42.)
Sir, *Damascus, June* 14, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that a Bedawi tribe known as the Ghiath carried away lately some 500 sheep from a spot situated about halfway between Karyetéïn and Palmyra. These sheep, which belonged mostly to inhabitants of the former village, have not, so far, been recovered.

On the other hand, when the same tribe tried very shortly afterwards to "lift" 300 camels laden with butter, which were on their way from Deir-el-Zor to Damascus, they were driven off, after a severe conflict, by a body of zaptiehs, who killed one of the Bedoween and took seven of them, who were wounded, prisoners.

It appears that two of the latter were beheaded by their captors—whether they had died of their wounds or were killed is not quite clear—and their heads brought in to Damascus and exhibited to the Vali, who ordered them to be buried.

At about the same time other members of the same tribe made a raid into the neighbourhood of Lake Hijaneh, to the south-east of Damascus, and carried off some 500 camels belonging to the well-known tribe of the Aneyzeh. Their Sheikh, Settam Pasha-el-Tayyar, started off in pursuit of them with a mere handful of his men and succeeded in recovering 480 of the plundered animals. He was, however, shot in the side, and died soon after reaching his tent.

I report these incidents to your Excellency in order to show what a state of lawlessness still exists in districts which are comparatively close to this city.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

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## No. 66.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received July* 6.)

(No. 224.)
My Lord, *Therapia, June* 30, 1900.

I HAVE received two telegrams from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting a serious raid of Persian Kurds into Turkish territory near Serai, which occurred on the 26th ultimo.

The persons taking part in this incursion, which is described by Major Maunsell as much more serious than an ordinary cattle raid, numbered 700. It was led by the Haidaranli Kurd Tahir Khan, for whom I venture to refer your Lordship to Major

Maunsell's despatch No. 44 of the 12th November, 1899 (see my despatch No. 553 of the 29th November, 1899).

The raiders pillaged two villages, but were afterwards dispersed by the Turkish troops, Tahir Khan, two of his nephews, and twenty followers being killed. Major Maunsell reports that it is generally believed in Van that this incursion was due to Russian influence, Tahir Khan being well known among Russian merchants. His two nephews who lost their lives are stated to have been in the employ of the Persian Government, the one a Brigadier-General in the army, the other as a Governor of a district.

I have telegraphed the substance of Major Maunsell's Reports to Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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No. 67.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received July 9.*)

(No. 228.)
My Lord, *Therapia, July 3, 1900.*

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship's despatch No. 119 of the 20th ultimo, respecting the condition of the Armenians in the Vilayet of Van.

Recent reports from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van bear testimony to a decided general though slow improvement in the condition of the inhabitants of his district. I have on several occasions drawn the attention of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the hardship as well as the impolicy and danger of pressing the people for taxes which they are unable to pay at present. As your Lordship is aware from my despatch No. 606 of the 27th December last, the representations of the Armenian Patriarch in the same sense were in some measure successful.

His Beatitude appears to be doing all in his power to lighten the fiscal burdens of his unfortunate countrymen, and I shall not fail as occasion arises to do what I properly can on their behalf.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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No. 68.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received July 9.*)

(No. 231. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Therapia, July 3, 1900.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 211 of the 18th ultimo I have the honour to transmit a French translation of the second portion of the Commercial Report of the Special Commission which was deputed to study the prospects of a railway from Konia to the Persian Gulf. A short Memorandum giving the main conclusions of this paper is likewise inclosed.

It will be seen that the estimated gross annual receipts are 139*l.* per kilometre, an amount which would about cover the working expenses, leaving no surplus for payment of interest on the capital.

The Report concludes with an interesting speculation on the possibility of the new line deflecting the mail and passenger traffic between Europe and India which now passes through the Suez Canal. It is thought that a saving of over three days and a-half would be effected as between London and Bombay by following the new route, and that if the mail contract is secured a large passenger traffic will follow, though it will be impossible to attract merchandize.

An abstract of the first part of this Report has just reached me, from a confidential source, likewise in the form of a French translation, and I shall have the honour to forward it to your Lordship in due course. It gives a detailed and interesting description of the economic and social condition of the provinces through which the new railway will pass.



The south-eastern portion of Konia and the provinces of Adana and Aleppo are depicted as possessing over large tracts a considerable agricultural and commercial development, together with some of the elements of public security. These conditions, however, are entirely wanting in most parts of Diarbekir, Mosoul, and Bagdad, where the depredations of Arab, and to a still greater extent of Kurdish, brigands have depopulated vast regions, or rendered them too insecure for peaceful occupations.

The Report regards the hydrographic condition of the provinces of Bagdad and Bussorah as almost desperate. Several generations would be required, under a good Government, to restore the canals and regulate the flow of the water, but under existing circumstances there is no prospect of improvement.

The nomadic propensities of the bulk of the population form another great obstacle to progress.

The second portion of the Report, now inclosed, does not describe the course of the proposed line in detail, and it is only possible to deduce from it the general direction. Adana will be left, apparently, some distance to the south. An outlet in the Gulf of Alexandretta is necessary, but no final decision is come to between the merits of Alexandretta and a new port called Castapol, which appears to be situated in the neighbourhood of the Bay of Ayas.

The line will pass about midway between Aintab and Aleppo, cross the Euphrates south of Biredjik, and proceed viâ Ourfa and Mardin to Mosul, leaving Diarbekir to the north to be reached eventually by a branch line. The right bank of the Tigris is followed from Mosul to Bagdad, whence the line makes straight for the nearest point of the Euphrates, which it crosses, to follow its right bank to Zobeir near Bussorah. Thence it proceeds to Kasima (Kathama) Bay, to the north of Koweit.

It is too early to judge what will be the effect of this Report on the prospects of the enterprise, but it would seem as if the discouraging accounts which it contains of the state of the country and the small estimate of receipts would hardly tempt the ordinary investor, unless accompanied by exceptionally satisfactory arrangements with the Ottoman Government concerning the kilometric guarantee.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure in No. 68.

KONIA–BAGDAD RAILWAY.

*Précis of Second Part of the Commercial Report of the Technical Commission.*

THE Report deals separately with the three main divisions into which the line naturally falls. The first of these is the section from Konia to Alexandretta, the second from Alexandretta to the confluence of the Lower Zab with the Tigris a little north of latitude 35°, and the third from the latter point to Koweit. The length of the three sections, including their branch lines, is respectively 465, 928 and 1,007 kilom., making a total of 2,400 kilom. from Konia to Koweit.

The general course of section 1 is south-easterly to within 10 kilom. of Karaman. It proceeds viâ Eregli across the Taurus, by the valley of the River Tchakid and on apparently to Hamidiye, leaving Adana considerably to the south. Thence, southwards, to the Gulf of Alexandretta, the coast of which it follows to Alexandretta. The object of keeping to the south of the Konia Province is to avoid, on the one hand, encroaching upon and overlapping the zone of the Angora Railway in the north, and on the other to absorb as much as possible of the local traffic which at present seeks an outlet by the little seaports lying between Adalia and Mersina. The centre of gravity of the entire line from the port of Ismid (Sea of Marmara) to Alexandretta lies about 100 kilom. to the westward of Konia. The estimate of the receipts of section 1 is founded, therefore, on the assumption that goods reaching the line to the east of that point will seek an outlet at Alexandretta. The existing Adana–Mersina line will lose the traffic which now passes between the Vilayet of Konia and the port of Mersina, but Adana will continue to be the market for the produce of the northern portion of the province in which it lies, and such of it as is destined for export will still be shipped at Mersina. Generally speaking, the agricultural produce of Southern Adana will utilize the existing line. On the other hand, a considerable traffic from the neighbourhood of

Ceserea will be attracted by the new line. The receipts per kilometre are put at 3,907 fr. a-year, of which only 800 fr. will be derived from passengers.

An outlet in the Gulf of Alexandretta was an absolute necessity. Mersina was discarded at once, being an open roadstead not suitable for the purposes of the line. Alexandretta has many advantages, but the Report favours an outlet in the Bay of Ayas at a point called Castopol, on grounds given in the portion devoted to section 2.

The centre of gravity of the line from Alexandretta to Koweit is placed on the point where the Lower Zab falls into the Tigris. Goods reaching the line below this point will gravitate to the Persian Gulf; goods reaching it above, to Alexandretta.

For the first part of section 2 there are two alternatives:

1. From Alexandretta to the Euphrates passing about half-way between the important centres of Aleppo and Aintab, and on to Mardin and Mosoul.

2. From Castopol, following the course of the Djihan River northwards to Hamidiye and on viâ Osmaniye, across the Giaour and Kurd Mountains to a point near Killis, and thence coinciding with 1.

The Report favours 2 on the ground that if the line is brought to Alexandretta it will be exposed to easy attack from the sea during the whole length of its course along the Gulf of Alexandretta, whereas Castopol is reached without running along the sea coast. A long stretch of the line to Alexandretta would be unremunerative. On the other hand, Alexandretta has some undoubted advantages. The port is already constructed, whereas at Castopol there is nothing but a barren shore. It would also be much easier to compete with the camel traffic between Aleppo and the sea by a line to Alexandretta, following much the same course as the camels. But Castopol would be a much more formidable rival to Mersina, these two points being at an equal distance from Adana.

Whichever line is adopted, there must be branch lines to Aleppo and Aintab. Diarbekir will be left far to the north, and a right reserved to make a branch line thither and on to Malatia, when the economical prospect improves. For the present, the condition of the Diarbekir Province is unfavourable.

The annual receipts per kilom. of section 2 are put at 2,800 fr. from Alexandretta, and 2,388 fr. from Castopol.

Section 3 is from the Lower Zab to Koweit, following the right bank of the Tigris to Bagdad, thence across the Euphrates at the nearest point, down the right bank of the latter river viâ Kerbela and Nedjef to Zobeir, near Bussorah, and thence to Kasima Bay, Koweit. Two branch lines are contemplated: from Sadiye, north of Bagdad, to Khanikine, on the Persian frontier (115 kilom.), and from Zobeir to Bussorah (19 kilom.).

Competition will scarcely be possible with the water traffic between Bagdad and the Persian Gulf, but the line will be largely used by the 40,000 pilgrims from Persia who visit the holy places of the Shiite sect of Mussulmans. The receipts for the section are estimated at 3,900 fr. per kilom., of which only 1,119 fr. are set down to goods traffic. Discoveries of bitumen and naphtha would greatly increase the productiveness of the line. Regarding the line from Konia to the Persian Gulf as a whole, the important question arises whether it will attract the traffic in goods, mails, and passengers between Europe and India which now passes by the Suez Canal. Merchandize is sure to follow the old route, but there is a good prospect of tempting a portion of the passengers, and their numbers will be largely increased if the postal contract for the mails is secured.

The mails now take fourteen days sixteen hours from London to Bombay viâ Suez. At a similar speed of 14½ knots by sea and 30 miles an hour by land, they would take ten days twenty-three and a-half hours viâ Bagdad, a saving of three days sixteen and a-half hours. The postal contract for 90,000*l.* now given to the Peninsular and Oriental Company would, if transferred to the new line, add 500 fr. per kilom. to the receipts as given above.

For passengers, the cost of the first-class journey from London to Bombay, which may now be put, including food, at 72*l.* per head, would be reduced to 61*l.*

The prospect of securing the Indian mail contract would be improved if English capital participated in the enterprise, and it would become a certainty if the Indian railway system were extended northwards to the Persian Gulf.

The estimates of receipts per kilometre as above given, and which average 3,476 fr. (139*l.*) over the whole line, have been reached without including problematical profits from the through traffic of mails and passengers.



## No. 69.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received July* 16.)

(No. 233.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, July* 6, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, giving an interesting account of the condition of affairs in the Koshad and Norduz Cazas of the vilayet, and I venture to draw your Lordship's particular attention to the efforts made by Russian Consular officers to win over the Kurdish tribes in these districts.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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### Inclosure in No. 69.

*Major Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 26.)

Sir, *Van, June* 19, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to report that I have just returned from a journey to the Koshab and Norduz Cazas of the vilayet, and found the country quiet.

Wheat bread was practically unobtainable, owing to the bad harvests of last year and the present high prices ruling in Van, and the people have to subsist on barley and rye, with various roots, until the new harvest is gathered. No deaths from starvation had occurred, although I heard reports to this effect before leaving Van.

This season has so far been extremely favourable, and an excellent crop is expected from all parts of the vilayet.

The whole Norduz district was severely pillaged at the time of the massacres, and has practically made no recovery since.

The district comprises a wide upland basin, drained by many tributaries, forming the head waters of the Bohtan River, and has extensive pasturage on the neighbouring hills for sheep and goats, which produce the best wool or "tiflik" (goat's hair) in the province.

Various Kurds and others told me that before that time there were quite ten times that number of sheep in the district, and, from the deserted state of the country, I should think this was true.

One influential Kurd told me that there was no chance of recovery until some other Government took over the country.

The chief complaint was the general insecurity caused by the several Hamidieh regiments in that neighbourhood, and intertribal quarrels and raids among the Kurds.

Sheref Bey, of the Shekak, Hajji Agha, of the Hartoshi, Mustafa Pasha, of the Miran, Umer Agha, of the Shidan, Sadon Bey, of the Mukuri, at Karahissar, Sheref Bey, of Norduz itself, the perpetrator of most of the Van massacres, all of them Hamidieh except the last, are the chief Kurds of bad reputation who live in or close to this district.

My Russian colleague, M. Maefsky, travelled through this country last autumn, and I heard some interesting details which tend to show his constant endeavours to conciliate and win over the Kurds to Russian influence.

Near Khoshab is a high mountain, on whose summit is a "ziaret," or shrine, of a departed Kurdish saint, and which is a place much venerated locally, and to which pilgrimages are made.

M. Maefsky climbed to the summit, and there sacrificed a sheep with considerable ceremony to the memory of the Sheikh, at the same time distributing generous presents to all the local Kurds who accompanied him. The amount distributed in one small village at the foot of the mountain was as much as £T. 7.

His cavasses are all Armenians (dressed as Cossacks), so it could scarcely have been done on their behalf.

This sacrifice of a sheep had a considerable effect locally, as I heard it spoken of in Khoshab and other places as a very meritorious action.

I also ascended the mountain (11,525 feet), but the snow near the summit is too deep for pilgrimages to be made at this season.

I have heard M. Maefsky or M. Prejevalsky (from Erzeroum) spoken of approvingly

by Kurdish Aghas in various parts of the country towards their frontier, and I think there must be some foundation for the various reports that most of the Hamidieh Chiefs have been bought over or largely influenced by these Russians, who are constantly travelling among them.

The price of bread in Van has continued very high, and this seriously affects the trade of the place and the condition of the poorer Armenians in the town and surrounding districts.

This season's wheat is now beginning to arrive from Diarbekir, and high prices can no longer be maintained.

At one time the price reached 120 paras, or 3 piastres, an oke, which is exorbitant in this country.

There is a sufficiency of wheat in the town, but a ring of Armenian merchants and some others have forced up the prices and restricted sales.

The Vali, although he has been laid up, has done all he could, and succeeded several times in bringing down prices, but every device that avarice and covetousness could suggest was used to defeat his object. He tried, for instance, to bring wheat from other districts, but in many cases the ring were before him, and acquired the supply before he could intervene.

Some merchants have made money, but the great mass of struggling Armenian villagers, who were making some headway after the massacres, have suffered for want of food, and have got deeper into debt, and the whole forms an interesting forecast of what Armenian Home Rule would be like should it ever be called into existence.

The taxes of this vilayet have been collected this year with considerable rigour, although without actual illegality.

The new "Defterdar," Shevgi Bey, who only arrived here some months ago, is not turning out a good official, and absorbs much of the money into his own pockets in various ways.

In a vilayet so poor in resources as this, such peculation is very serious.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

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No. 70.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received July* 16.)

(No. 238.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, July* 10, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 231 of the 3rd instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith a French summary of the first part of the Commercial Report of the Special Commission deputed to study the prospects of the projected line from Konia to the Persian Gulf.*

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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No. 71.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received July* 16.)

(No. 239.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, July* 10, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch, which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, reporting an affray between the local authorities and Kurds in the district of Zidjé, and depredations of the Hamidiehs in the district of Habeshi.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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* Not printed.



Inclosure in No. 71.

*Vice-Consul Jones to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 24.)
Sir, *Diarbekir, June* 26, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to report that on the 18th instant an affray, which resulted in some loss of life, occurred between the local authorities in the district of Zidjé in this province and the villagers of the Kurdish village of Darakol.

The inhabitants of the village named had neglected to pay the sheep tax due to the Government, and had, moreover, refused to hand over to the Executive a villager who had been sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment for murder. The Kaïmakam of Zidjé accordingly, accompanied by a body of mounted zaptiehs and the local Commissioner of Police, proceeded to the village with the view of enforcing the demands of the authorities, but met with a stubborn resistance on the part of the villagers, with the result that of these last, one was killed and two others were wounded, the only loss incurred by the Kaïmakam's party, who, with one exception, succeeded in effecting their escape, being the disabling of that official's horse and the capture by the villagers of the Commissioner of Police, whom they beat with great severity.

At the Kaïmakam's request the authorities here decided to send zaptiehs to his assistance, and on Saturday, the 23rd instant, a body of armed men under the command of a captain, left this city for Zidjé.

I have the honour, also, to report that on the 24th instant a body of Hamidieh troops attacked the village of Habeshi, situated at four hours' distance from Diarbekir, and drove off many horses belonging to the inhabitants.

In view of the frequent attacks made by the Hamidiehs in that district, the road to Aleppo is becoming more unsafe from day to day, and even now the muleteers, engaged in the work of transporting merchandize along that road, only venture to make the journey in large companies armed so as to resist the attacks of the Hamidiehs, who infest that highway.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. FRANCIS JONES.

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No. 72.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received July* 16.)

(No. 240.)
My Lord, *Therapia, July* 10, 1900.

HAVING heard that the Imperial Government had appointed to the vacant post of Vali of Aleppo, Ennis Pasha, who, as your Lordship will remember, was the Vali of Diarbekir at the time of the massacres, and was dismissed from that post on the representations of this and other Embassies (see Lord Currie's No. 939 of the 11th November, 1896), I have thought it well, in view of his deplorable antecedents, to convey to the Sublime Porte a serious warning of the dangers involved by such an appointment, and I yesterday reminded Tewfik Pasha of the serious charges made against him during his tenure of office at Diarbekir, and recorded in documents laid before Parliament and other European Chambers. I expressed my great surprise that the Porte should have again selected such a man for office, and I dwelt upon the responsibility which the Government was incurring by making an appointment which could hardly fail to revive the recollection of the massacres with which Ennis Pasha had been so notoriously connected.

The French Embassy has made similar representations, at the same time calling attention to the state of affairs at Ourfa, in the Aleppo district, regarding which M. Constans has received somewhat alarming reports from the French Consul in that place. It would seem that there is great insecurity in the town, and a good deal of openly-expressed fanaticism and hostility to the Christians, the French missionaries having been stoned and insulted in the streets without redress.

Ennis Pasha left Constantinople last week by steamer for his new post before his appointment was publicly announced, in order, doubtless, to forestall any action on the part of the Embassies.

The Russian Ambassador, to whom I spoke last night on the subject, said that he would make similar representations to the Sublime Porte.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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No. 73.

*The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 148.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, July* 20, 1900.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 240 of the 10th instant, respecting the appointment of Ennis Pasha to the post of Governor of Aleppo.

I approve your Excellency's action in warning the Turkish Government of the dangers involved in the appointment of an official of such bad antecedents.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

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No. 74.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received July* 23.)

(No. 249.)
My Lord, *Therapia, July* 18, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 240 of the 10th instant, I have the honour to report that in answer to the representations which I made, in concert with my French, Russian, and Italian colleagues, to Tewfik Pasha against the appointment of Ennis Pasha as Vali of Aleppo, the Sultan replied, through the Grand Vizier, to the following effect: The late Governor-General, Raif Pasha, being unwell, a successor had to be found, and His Majesty had thought fit to appoint Ennis Pasha. The ardent desire of his Majesty was the strict maintenance of order and tranquility throughout the Empire, and if it is proved that Ennis Pasha does not succeed in this respect in his new post His Majesty would, of course, consider the advisability of changing him.

This answer was tantamount to ignoring the representations which had been made by the four Embassies, and upon being asked by our Consuls at Aleppo as to the attitude they should take on Ennis Pasha's arrival, we decided, after previous consultation, to instruct them not to make the customary ceremonial visit to the Vali, whose arrival at Aleppo was announced on the 14th instant. At the same time I enjoined upon Mr. Falanga, Acting British Vice-Consul, to observe common action with his colleagues.

It is to be hoped that the joint representations of the Embassies, coupled with the attitude of the Consuls, will have their effect, and that the Sultan will ultimately be induced to retain Raif Pasha at his post, or appoint some other unobjectionable official. In any case we felt that the nomination of Ennis Pasha, particularly at such a moment, ought not to be allowed to pass without strong protest.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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No. 75.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received July* 23.)

(No. 252.)
My Lord, *Therapia, July* 17, 1900.

RECENT events in China are being followed in this country with general and very deep interest, and I understand that the local press, although restrained in its language, cannot quite conceal its sympathy with the Chinese while apparently condemning the excesses which have been committed.

If the ghastly tragedy, which there is all too much reason to-day to dread is true, has been perpetrated at Peking, there is no doubt that it will affect the Moslem



population of this Empire in a way which is far from desirable, and which, as long as it remains unpunished and the Moslems in ignorance of the retribution, may endanger the security of the Christian population throughout Asia Minor, and especially in those remote districts where the Christians are in a great minority. Providentially there is promise of an abundant harvest, and the reports from several districts in the interior are more encouraging than for some years past, so that it is to be hoped that the hardships of Turkish taxation and the consequent exactions of the officials will be sensibly lessened in the present season.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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No. 76.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received July* 23.)

(No. 255.)
My Lord, *Therapia, July* 18, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 224 of the 30th ultimo, I beg to inform your Lordship that Mr. Spring-Rice telegraphed to me yesterday that the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs asks for my help in urging the Ottoman Government to send at once to the frontier a Turkish official to inquire into the circumstances connected with the late raid across the frontier, and jointly with the Persian official now on the sport to arrange disputes.

It being eminently desirable that matters of this kind should be arranged amicably between the Turkish and Persian Governments, I propose speaking privately to the Ottoman Minister for Foreign Affairs in the sense of Mr. Spring-Rice's telegram.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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No. 77.

*The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 157.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, July* 28, 1900.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 249 of the 18th instant, reporting the instructions which you issued, after consultation with your French, Russian, and Italian colleagues, to Her Majesty's Acting Vice-Consul at Aleppo, as to the attitude to be taken by the Consuls of the four Powers on the arrival at his post of Ennis Pasha, lately appointed Vali of Aleppo.

Your Excellency's instructions to Mr. Falanga are approved by Her Majesty's Government.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

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No. 78.

*The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 158.)
Sir. *Foreign Office, August* 4, 1900.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 255 of the 18th ultimo respecting a recent raid by Persian Kurds across the Turkish frontier.

I approve your proposal to urge on the Turkish Government the expediency of sending a Turkish official at once to the frontier to inquire into the circumstances, as suggested by Mr. Spring-Rice.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

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## No. 79.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 6.)*

(No. 256.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, July 20, 1900.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 224 of the 30th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, giving more particular information as to the recent raid by Persian Kurdish tribesmen across the frontier near Serai.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure in No. 79.

*Major Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 29.)
Sir, *Van, July 1, 1900.*

I HAVE the honour to report that a serious raid by Persian Kurds occurred in the Akhorik Plain, north of Serai, on the 26th ultimo.

The place is inhabited by the Takuri tribe under Hussein Bey, Turkish subjects, and as it was known that they were enemies of the Kurds across the Persian border, a post of fifty regular infantry soldiers was placed at Kochkiran Ashaghi and Pulchukii Ashaghi, both well inside the Turkish frontier.

The attacking party consisted of Haideranli and Jellali Kurds, under the leadership of Tahir Khan, and, from the latest estimates, the force numbered 700 mounted men and 400 footmen, their object being to pillage and destroy as many of the Takuri as possible.

They were perfectly aware of the presence of the guard of soldiers, and the attack was divided into five sections—two to attack the soldiers, and three to pillage the surrounding villages.

The soldiers turned out with only the cartridges they had in their belts, and, taking up a position on a knoll, soon drove off the attack with their Mausers, killing Tahir Khan, his two nephews, and some thirty Kurds.

Their cartridges becoming exhausted, they charged with the bayonet, whereupon the attackers fled. The Captain of the company, with three soldiers, became isolated, were cut off, and killed.

The Lieutenant was severely wounded, and four soldiers also wounded.

The pillaging party had but little time, and succeeded in carrying off only a few cattle and sheep, and partially pillaging two villages.

Tahir Khan was a very rich and influential Kurd of the Haideranli tribe, and an attack in such large numbers, led by him in person, appears more serious than an ordinary cattle-lifting or plundering expedition.

The attack was entirely unprovoked on this side, as the Takuri are too small a tribe to venture to attack so influential a Chief as Tahir Khan was.

The general opinion, judging from the unusual size of the raid, is that it must have been carried out with Russian connivance in order to keep this country disturbed.

Tahir Khan and his neighbour, the Khan of Maku, are entirely under Russian influence, and are practically independent of the Persian Government.

One nephew of Tahir Khan was the "Hakim" or Persian Sub-Governor of Kara Aine, and the other was a "Mirpanj" or Brigadier-General in the Persian army, and specially-appointed guardian of the frontier.

Tahir Khan had no children, and the nephews were his successors, and the family is now extinct in the male line.

A squadron of cavalry has been sent from here to reinforce the detachments of infantry already at Bergri and Serai.

I had the honour of informing your Excellency of the substance of the above by telegraph.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

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## No. 80.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 6.)*

(No. 259.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, July 27, 1900.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 249 of the 18th instant, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Acting Consul at Aleppo, reporting the arrival of Ennis Pasha, the new Vali, and the attitude of the Consular Body towards his Excellency.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure in No. 80.

*Acting Consul Falanga to Sir N. O'Conor.*

Sir, *Aleppo, July 17, 1900.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 28 of the 10th instant, and the exchange of telegrams on the matter of the appointment of the new Vali, Ennis Pasha, I have the honour to report to your Excellency that I have been all the time in good concert with my colleagues, the French, Russian, Italian, and Austrian Consuls, who received the same instructions as your Excellency gave me.

We all understand that we are to abstain from making the official call on Ennis Pasha.

All the Consuls have been advised officially yesterday, the 16th, by Circulars, by Ennis Pasha of his nomination as Vali at Aleppo, and were invited to call upon him on the 21st instant.

The arrival of Ennis Pasha seems to have caused a bad impression in general, and especially on the foreign subjects in Aleppo.

Even the officials of the Government do not seem satisfied with this appointment. They relate that on the day of his arrival (Saturday), having found out that the offices of the Government were closed on Sundays, he has ordered all the officials to be present on that day, telling them that their Friday was sufficient for them as holiday, and that Sunday is to be considered in the future as a working day.

He ordered the Rabbi of the Israelite community to pay daily 2,000 piastres towards the arrears of the soldiers exemption tax (askerie) due by his community, whilst such payment had been fixed by Raif Pasha at 500 piastres per day, which sum was attained with great difficulties and great sacrifices on the part of the Jews.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. FALANGA.

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## No. 81.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 6.)*

(No. 265.)
My Lord, *Therapia, July 31, 1900.*

ON receipt of a telegram from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, of which I have the honour to inclose a paraphrase, respecting a reported massacre in the district of Talori, I informed the Minister for Foreign Affairs yesterday of the intelligence which had reached me, and inquired of his Excellency whether he had received any information on the subject. At the same time I expressed the earnest hope that, if the news proved to be correct, severe measures would be taken to punish those responsible for so atrocious a crime, and I pointed out that unless repressive measures of a very drastic kind were taken in this and similar cases, the lives of all the Armenians would be rendered so intolerable that they would welcome outside protection and a more just Government, no matter from whom the offer came.

Tewfik Pasha replied that the Grand Vizier had received a Report, but that, as far as his memory went, the numbers killed or injured were very much less than those

mentioned by Mr. Lamb, but he would send me a copy of the Report. This his Excellency has since done, and I have the honour to inclose a copy herewith.

From a further telegram which I received last night from Mr. Lamb, in a somewhat mutilated form, it would seem that though the Vali declares that he has had no news of the reported massacre, Mr. Lamb regards his intelligence as substantially confirmed. He states that one village has been wholly, and two others partially, destroyed, and that the victims number from 400 to 500. Mr. Lamb adds that three villages, which suffered most in 1894, are reported to be surrounded by troops, but it is not clear whether this measure is taken for their protection or not.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure 1 in No. 81.

*Consul Lamb to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(Telegraphic.) P. *Erzeroum, July* 28, 1900.

A LETTER, purporting to come from a survivor of fresh massacres in the district of Talori, has reached me through the Armenian Bishop. According to the writer, three villages in that district were destroyed, and 500 people massacred, on the 14th instant, by troops and Kurds, under Ali Pasha, of Bitlis. I am making inquiries as to the truth of this intelligence.

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Inclosure 2 in No. 81.

*Report received from Tewfik Pasha.*

LE nombre des brigands poursuivis et tués pour la troisième fois à Sebghanik était de seize. Parmi eux se trouvait le Chef de bande, Autranik.

L'enquête effectuée a établi qu'il ne reste plus aucun brigand armé à Sassoun,et que les parages de Talori sont complètement purgés de tous malfaiteurs.

L'endroit incendié, qui avait été signalé précédemment comme étant une écurie, était en réalité une petite chapelle. Trois brigands qui s'y étaient refugiés avaient ouvert le feu sur les troupes Impériales par des ouvertures pratiquées dans les murs en guise de meurtrières. Comme en dépit des sommations réitérées et des assurances qui leur furent faites ils avaient continué à tirer, et que leurs balles avaient atteint six soldats, dont deux furent tués, force fut aux troupes d'y mettre le feu. Obligés ainsi de déguerpir, les trois brigands furent tués. Quand on pénétra plus tard dans l'immeuble incendié, on y trouva un homme asphyxié.

Grâce cependant aux mesures prises, et à la présence de nombreuses troupes à Sassoun et à Talori, la tranquillité et la sécurité publiques dans ces parages n'ont point été compromises, et Musulmans et Chrétiens continuent à vaquer à leurs occupations en toute confiance.

*Le* 8 *Juillet*, 1900 (v. s.).

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No. 82.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received August* 6.)

(No. 270.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, August* 1, 1900.

IN my despatch No. 255 of the 18th ultimo I reported that, in consequence of a request from the Persian Government conveyed to me by Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran, I proposed to speak privately to the Minister for Foreign Affairs with a view to the dispatch of a Turkish official to the Persian frontier to hold a joint inquiry with a Persian Delegate who had already been sent there in connection with the recent raid near Serai.

Some days after writing that despatch I received a further telegram from Mr. Spring-Rice, conveying a further request from the Persian Government for my intervention in connection with an alleged incursion of Turkish troops into Persian



No. 83*.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received August* 13.)

(No. 54.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, August* 13, 1900.

MAJOR MAUNSELL, Vice-Consul at Van, telegraphs that he was attacked by Kurds while travelling near Elk. They fired upon him from the neighbouring hills, and he managed with difficulty to bring off his party with loss of his baggage. His Dragoman was wounded.

On my representation to the Porte, instructions have been sent to the Vali ordering the arrest and punishment of the offenders and restoration of the baggage.

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territory not far from Bagdad, which resulted in the destruction of the village of Scomar.

Having ascertained that the Persian Ambassador, who has just returned from leave, had spoken to the Minister for Foreign Affairs regarding these raids, I inquired the day before yesterday of Tewfik Pasha into the facts of the case, and urged upon him the desirability of a joint inquiry on the spot with a view to reaching an amicable arrangement.

Tewfik Pasha said that, as regards the raid near Serai, this proposal was already under consideration, and that, though no decision had yet been come to, he believed an Ottoman Delegate would be sent to the scene of the raid.

As regards the incursion near Bagdad, his Excellency explained, though in somewhat confused language, that there were certain undefined pasture and arable lands on the frontier the boundaries of which had never been properly delimitated, notwithstanding that frequent applications to this end had been made during the last twelve years to the Persian Embassy and Government.

He believed the fact to be that the Persian Government had no real authority over the frontier tribes, or any sufficient regular force to enforce obedience, and hence they were unwilling to demarcate the frontier.

He sent for a telegram which he had lately received from the Vali of Bagdad, recounting the facts, and was good enough to give me a copy of it, which I inclose herewith.

I saw nothing in Tewfik Pasha's observations to make me think that the Turkish Government consider the matter a very serious one, and still less that they contemplate any aggressive action.

I have informed Mr. Spring-Rice of the above conversation.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure in No. 82.

*Vali of Bagdad to Tewfik Pasha.*

(Télégraphique.) *Le* 16 *Juillet*, 1900 (v. s.).

TROIS CENTS quavaliers [*sic*], ayant à leur tête Davoud Khan, Chef de la tribu Persane des Helléors, ont envahi aujourd'hui le Caza de Mendéli, et se sont mis à piller tout ce qu'ils trouvaient dans les maisons et chez les tribus des environs de Baghtchéluk.

Les gendarmes montés se trouvant à Mendéli furent envoyés à leur poursuite, mais, vu leur insuffisance par rapport au grand nombre des agresseurs, les autorités locales dûrent réclamer des renforts suffisants que les autorités militaires leur ont envoyés.

Mais dans l'intervalle environ 400 cavaliers des tribus des Mamoudes et des Daoudas, qui se sont dernièrement réfugiés en Perse, étaient venus se joindre ax hommes de Davoud Khan pour piller les tribus de Mendéli, ce qui avait donné u mouvement une plus grande extension.

Toutes les dispositions nécessaires ont été prises pour le rétablissement de l'ordre et de la sécurité à Mendéli.

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No. 83.

*The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 163.)

Sir, *Foreign Office, August* 9, 1900.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 265 of the 31st ultimo respecting a massacre which is reported to have taken place in the district of Talori.

I entirely approve the representations which your Excellency has addressed to the Minister for Foreign Affairs on this subject, and await with interest your further reports on the facts.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

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No. 84.

*The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 43.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, August* 14, 1900.

THE Turkish Chargé d'Affaires has called here with instructions to deny the report of a massacre in the Talori district, of which you informed me in your despatch No. 265 of the 31st July, and to state that the pursuit of brigands has been all that has happened. Hamid Bey said that the report of our Consul confirms this. Is this so?

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No. 85.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received August* 15.)

(No. 55.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, August* 15, 1900.

TALORI massacre.

My despatch of the 14th instant, due on Monday, reporting strong representations made to Ottoman Government, gives further details. I am sorry to say reports received by this and other Embassies are absolutely contrary to the statement of the Turkish Chargé d'Affaires, though probably there has been some exaggeration of the number of victims.

(Confidential.)

I think possibly the Sultan neither knew beforehand nor abetted the massacre, as I believe he was most anxious to keep things quiet till his Jubilee; but it is the consequence of his general policy towards the Armenians, and a speedy and exemplary punishment of the delinquents is the only way he can escape the responsibility and odium.

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No. 86.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received August* 19.)

(No. 56.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, August* 19, 1900.

MASSACRE in Talori district.

My despatch No. 285 of the 14th instant.

The Sultan informed me to-day, through the Minister for Foreign Affairs, that he still discredits the reports of a massacre at Spaghank, but that he has, nevertheless, decided to send a Special Commission to inquire into the facts in order that any guilty persons shall be punished.

I do not know yet how the Commission will be composed.

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No. 87.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received August* 20.)

(No. 278.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, August* 11, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copies of two despatches which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, reporting outrages committed by the Hamidieh troops within his district.

At the request of the Grand Vizier, to whom I had caused the contents of these despatches to be communicated verbally, I have furnished his Highness with a Memorandum embodying the substance of Mr. Jones' information.

I have, &c.
(For the Ambassador),
(Signed) G. BARCLAY.

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Inclosure 1 in No. 87.

*Vice-Consul Jones to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 27.)
Sir, *Diarbekir, July* 17, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to report that considerable dissatisfaction prevails among the more orderly part of the Mahommedan population of this city and district, owing to the frequent attacks made by roving bands of the Hamidieh troops on the peaceable villagers, and travellers who are unable to obtain any redress for the injuries inflicted on them.

As instances of the violence and lawlessness of these dreaded troops, I may mention the following incidents:—

On the night of the 13th instant the village of Yuvadjik, about four hours' distance to the east of this city, was attacked by Hamidiehs, who carried off twenty-five horses belonging to the villagers.

On the 14th instant the village of Shukurli, also in that direction, was visited by these troops and a struggle ensued which resulted in the death of the village Headman ("Kyaya") and the disabling of three villagers, about 200 sheep being carried off by the assailants.

Again, on the 14th instant, a certain Sheikh Hassan, of Karadja Dagh, while on his way hither with his wife and a few fellow-travellers, was attacked at a spot not more than an hour's distance from the city by a band of Hamidiehs, who besides plundering him and his companions, violated the Sheikh's wife in his presence. The injured Sheikh at once presented a Petition setting forth his grievances to the Acting Vali, who referred it to the judicial authorities, but when the complainant appealed to these latter to take the necessary steps in accordance with his official request, he was informed that the Petition was lost and that no action could be taken in the matter.

Again, on the night of the 15th instant, the village of Habeshi, an attack on which was reported in my despatch No. 24 of the 26th ultimo, was a second time visited by the Hamidiehs, who carried off 120 sheep, while at the same time their comrades made a raid upon the village of Deveghetchid, at four hours' distance from Diarbekir, and carried off 200 sheep.

I have the honour to add, however, that if the peaceable inhabitants, Mahommedan as well as Christian, have but too good reason to complain that life is being rendered intolerable by the repeated outrages committed by these privileged bandits, who are always allowed to go unpunished, the local authorities are displaying renewed activity in the direction of political espionage, and stringent orders have been issued forbidding the people to refer to these outrages as having been committed by the Hamidiehs. The facts of their perpetration cannot be denied, but care is to be taken to avoid connecting the name of the Hamidiehs with these untoward incidents.

Under these circumstances it is easy to foresee that many accusations will be brought against innocent persons with the view of extorting blackmail, and as soon as the Vali returns to Diarbekir his arrival here will probably be closely followed by numerous arrests amongst the unoffending people, for no one can call in question his Excellency's zeal in ferreting out cases of alleged conspiracy and in imprisoning on the flimsiest pretexts persons whom he suspects or pretends to suspect of political disaffection.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. FRANCIS JONES.

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Inclosure 2 in No. 87.

*Vice-Consul Jones to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 30.)
Sir, *Diarbekir, July* 23, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 27 of the 17th instant I have the honour to report that I have just received information giving particulars of further outrages recently committed by the Hamidiehs.

On the 19th instant the village of Habeshi was a third time attacked by these troops, who on this occasion burnt the granaries and completely destroyed the village.

On the date of the 20th instant the two villages of Tchulli and Derbeshar, about three hours' distance to the south-west of the city, were plundered and burnt to the ground by the Hamidiehs.

On the 21st instant two villages were visited by these troops, one of which, a Mussulman village, that of Kytti, situated at a distance of an hour-and-a-half to the west, was also plundered and burnt down, while at the Christian village of Khymerik, distant about two-and-a-half hours to the north the inhabitants were left unmolested by the Hamidiehs, who, however, carried off 250 mules sent by their owners the Kurdish tribe, Duderi, to pasture near the village in question.

On the 22nd instant these troops raided the village of Kyrta, one hour to the west of the city, and carried off 400 sheep

I have the honour to add that all these villages with the sole exception of that of Khymerik, are inhabited by a purely Mahommedan population.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. FRANCIS JONES.

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No. 88.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received August* 20.)

(No. 279.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, August* 11, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, dealing with the state of affairs in that vilayet.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure in No. 88.

*Major Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 31.)
Sir, *Van, July* 24, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to forward the following report for the quarter ended the 30th June.

I have just returned from a visit to the northern cazas of the vilayet, and also passed by a route not previously travelled from Bergri to Diadin, through Tuji Plain and the Girdageul Pass.

Tuji is an upland basin under the east slopes of the Ala Dagh, and although there are the remains of some villages there, it is uninhabited, except in summer, by Kurds from the Bayazid Plain and Kizildize.

Not far from Bergri are a few small villages of Haideranli Kurds, abandoned in summer for tents, but otherwise the country is a succession of open downs and valleys, affording good pasturage.

I met several Kurdish Chiefs in Tuji, the principal being Ali Bey, son of Mirza Agha, the Chief of the Zorawa section of the Haideranli, settled in winter near Kizildize. Other Chiefs in Tuji were Mustafa Bey and Mehmed Bey.

Ali Bey struck me as an exceptionally favourable specimen of a Kurdish Chief, and has considerable influence.

The whole area from Abagha Plain and Bayazid to Patnotz and Khamur is inhabited by Haideranli, with its various sub-sections, the whole forming a powerful and exceptionally well-united band of Kurds, numbering some 9,000 tents, and supplying ten Hamidieh cavalry regiments.

Just now they were much excited by the recent death of Tahir Khan in a raid, he being one of the most influential of Haideranli Chiefs, although settled in Persia, and much respected by all the tribe, on this side of the border as well.

Any attempts at revenge now would only involve further collision with Osmanli troops, which was deprecated; but there is no doubt that if the troops at present in Bergri and Abagha were withdrawn, Hussein Bey, the Chief of the Takuri tribe who were attacked, would have to fly for his life. The troops up to the present have prevented any attempts at reprisals.



West of the Haideranli country are the Sipeki Kurds, with whom the former are constantly fighting; while between Bergri and Van are the Sheveli, who are also at enmity with the Haideranli, and practically prevent their access to Van markets.

The Takuri are counted as part of the large Shekak tribe, with whom the Haideranli have had constant struggles.

Thus it is difficult to see with so many sections constantly engaged in internecine warfare how any general concerted rising against Turkish power could take place, as a leader under whom they could all combine would be difficult to find. Possibly, however, a Sheikh or powerful religious leader—the late Sheikh Obeidulla or his son, the present Sheikh Mehmed Sadik—might have sufficient power to combine all the conflicting elements.

I submit that this Hamidieh organization has had considerable effect in consolidating the power of various tribal leaders, who are, as a rule, also the Kaïmakams of regiments, and have thus acquired an increased influence in their tribe, without, however, any increase to their loyalty to Osmanli Government, but rather to the fostering of what may be called the Kurdish national spirit.

Many times I have spoken of a Kaïmakam, meaning the Kaïmakam of the caza; but there is always a certain confusion and explanation such as "Ah, you must mean the 'Mulkie' or civil Kaïmakam, not our Kaïmakam."

The regular officers appointed as Hamidieh Commandants, who ought to be specially smart and capable leaders if they are to create a useful irregular force from such materials, are in almost all cases quite useless for service from age or other infirmity. The Divisional Commander here told me he has often asked for a better stamp of Hamidieh Commandant to be sent, but without result.

In Diadin, and at some other of the Russian frontier posts, many of the officers were "jeunes Turcs" exiled from some more favourable place, and very bitter against the way the Hamidieh were pampered, and readily accorded rank which it took them many years of faithful service to attain.

One remark from a young officer of Regulars attached to the Hamidieh was interesting:—

"Those tribes you have been travelling amongst think England far off. They all look towards Russia."

Around Diadin the Kurds certainly care little for the Civil Government, and I was told they do exactly as they please: rob their less powerful neighbours, and pillage caravans on the Persian trade route, thus driving traders and caravans into Russia, and to seek the terminus of the new railway at Erivan.

Recently the Kaïmakam of Diadin, a Stambuli, fresh from the schools, gave up his post in despair, being quite unable to manage the Kurds, and is now replaced by an "Alai Katib," or Quartermaster of a local Hamidieh Regiment (attached from the Regulars), who manages to get some taxes out of them.

From Diadin I returned to Arjish, passing through Hussein Pasha's villages of Patnotz and Sarisu.

Hussein Pasha and Hajji Timur Pasha were still absent at Erzingan, whither they had gone to see Zekki Pasha, and lodge complaints against the Vali of Van. They have now returned without having gained anything so far, although they gave the Mushir large presents.

In Patnotz is a large stone building, erected as a school for young Hamidieh Kurds under an Imperial Iradé some years ago. No scholars being forthcoming, Hussein Pasha appropriated the place, and lives in it.

On and round the Sarisu Plain, where Hussein Pasha, Hajji Timur Pasha, and Emin Pasha reside, no Christian population, the last having fled not long after the massacres.

A few remain in Patnotz, Zirekhli, and Karakum, but they are practically the serfs of these Pashas.

The large Armenian villages near the lake in the Arjish Caza are still protected by detachments of regular troops ordered by the Vali of Van, and are quite exempt from Kurdish oppression.

The Chiefs I met in Sarisu received me with effusive cordiality, and even before I mentioned the subject, began protesting that the Christians were now perfectly satisfied, and that any idea of oppression was far from their thoughts.

My late colleague, M. Maiefsky, travelled all through the country between Patnotz and the Russian frontier, and, pursuing, no doubt, the policy I have already mentioned in my despatch No. 26 of the 19th June last, seems to have distributed money freely

among the Kurds. For instance, for a cup of milk, or something worth a few paras, 5 piastres was always the price given.

I regret to say that Emin Pasha, after spending eight months in Van prison, has now been released. The prosecution—chiefly Turks in Arjish—declined to come forward, and the trial was in danger of falling through altogether when finally orders came from the Palace for his release.

The Vali told me that he was really let out on bail, and could be called up again to answer the charges, and this course was preferable to an acquittal.

I think the fact of his having spent eight months in prison, which shows that he is not quite beyond the power of the Government, will no doubt have a good effect on him.

He saw the Vali before he left, and protested strongly his good behaviour in future.

The Hekkiari Sandjak is now perfectly quiet, and I hear good accounts of the new Mutessarif of Bashkala.

Troops have been stationed in Lewin and Farashin to prevent any disturbances between Christians and Kurds. In Farashin they will be able to ward off any attacks on the Tiari Christians by the Hartoshi Kurds under Hajji Agha.

This latter is engaged in a struggle with his brother for the Chieftainship, and will not have time for much else.

Another post of troops has been placed in the hills above Vostan to keep in order Mustafa Pasha, the Chief (Hamidieh) of the Miran Kurds, who have their summer pastures there.

The late Kaïmakam of Julamerk, who was removed to Khoshab after his treatment of the raid on Tiari Christians last autumn, has been moved again to Gavvar, which is close to the Nestorian country, and where he may do further mischief.

It would be well if he could be removed from the vilayet altogether.

The price of bread in Van has now fallen considerably, and the people are engaged in gathering an excellent harvest.

As many of the poorer Armenians are very deep in debt for seed borrowed, I have brought the matter before the Vali, who has consented to put down all cases of exorbitant interest, and insist on only the actual amount of seed borrowed being returned without interest.

This will be a great relief to the poor.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

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No. 89.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received August* 20.)

(No. 280.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, August* 11, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copies of three despatches which I have received from the British Consular Agent at Mosul through Her Majesty's Consul-General at Bagdad respecting the election of a Chaldean Patriarch at the former place.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure 1 in No. 89.

*Letter from the British Consular Agent at Mosul.*

(No. 10.)
(Translation.)
Sir, *May* 22, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to report that the authorities have recovered, and restored to their owners, the mules which I reported had been stolen from Al Kosh and the convent of Deir Seida.

A party from the Zidikiyeh tribe, whose Chief is Hasan Jehanghir, last week



attacked the village of Babnith, looted the sheep there and killed two of the inhabitants.

Sheikh Nur Muhammad sent his men to the village of Doghat, whose inhabitants are Yezidis, plundered their sheep, numbering about 750, and killed one man.

Three days ago his Excellency the Vali received a telegram from the Minister of Justice at Constantinople prohibiting the Chaldean Bishops, who have assembled at Mosul, from electing a Patriarch at present, and ordering that they should in the first instance elect a *locum tenens*, and, after confirmation by the Porte of the appointment, to proceed to elect a Patriarch under his presidency; and further cautioning the said Bishops against the intervention and presence of the Latin Papal Delegate at the election. In the telegram it is added that, if this order is not complied with, it will be the worse for the Bishops.

(Signed) NIMROD RASSAM.

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Inclosure 2 in No. 89.

*Letter from the British Consular Agent at Mosul.*

(No. 11.)
(Translation.) *June* 25, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to inform you that his Excellency the Vali communicated to the Chaldean Bishops a telegraphic order received by him from the Minister of Justice that the Bishops might elect a *locum tenens* for the Patriarch, but without the intervention of the Latin Delegate. The Bishops sent a telegram to the Porte soliciting permission to elect a Patriarch at once, without electing in the first instance a *locum tenens*, assigning the reason that, as they had all assembled at Mosul they could not remain for the time necessary, first to elect a *locum tenens* which election was to be approved by the Porte, and afterwards to elect a Patriarch. Their request was complied with, and permission was given for them to elect a Patriarch at once, but with the proviso that there should be no interference whatever in the election by foreigners, namely, the Latin Delegate and his suite. This order was displeasing to the Delegate, who informed the Bishops that they could not make an election except in his presence, which was indispensable according to the orders from Rome, and at the same time he showed them the necessity for this, which caused the Bishops to send a joint telegram to Constantinople representing that, as the election was a religious matter, they begged permission for the Delegate's presence and co-operation. An answer was received by the Vali from the Minister of Justice entirely prohibiting the Delegate's intervention, on the ground that such would not be in accordance with the policy of the Turkish Government. On receipt of the telegram his Excellency summoned, on last Monday, all the Bishops to the Serai, and informed them of the final orders, at the same time warning them not to address the said Ministry in the matter again, and he explained that the Minister would not receive any further Petition or application from them or from the acting Patriarch until a Patriarch had been elected and the election had been approved by the Porte. The Bishops returned disappointed to their homes, and informed the Delegate of the purport of the telegram. Thus, the election has been postponed until the Delegate obtains, through the medium of the French Ambassador at Constantinople, permission for his participation in the election, or until Rome recedes from its decision.

Mahmud Agha, Commandant of the Police Battalion, brought here on last Thursday some of the chief robbers from the village of Mamuzdinan, in the Dhok district, he having gone to that place with a number of zaptiehs and fought with the people of the village and killed two of them. These villagers, besides being guilty of villainy, robbery, and bloodshed, have not paid for the last five or six years the accumulations of a large sum of money due to the Government on account of such as vergu and tithes, and have rebelled against the Government. The men who were brought in by Mahmud Agha have been imprisoned.

(Signed) NIMROD RASSAM.

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Inclosure 3 in No. 89.

*Letter from the British Consular Agent at Mosul.*

(No. 12.)
(Translation.) *July* 10, 1900.

WITH reference to my letter No. 11 dated the 25th ultimo, I have the honour to report that yesterday the Latin Delegate with the Chaldean Bishops entered the Church of Meskinta at Mosul where they elected Mar Emmanuel, the Bishop of Sa'art, Patriarch, and enthroned him. Thence he was conducted in procession and with ceremony to the Patriarchal house. All this was done without the permission of the local authorities, and without orders from the Porte. It is said that when his Excellency the Vali heard of it, he was very much annoyed, and made a telegraphic report of the affair to Constantinople. It remains to be seen what will be the result of this occurrence.

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No. 90.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received August* 20.)

(No. 285. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Therapia, August* 14, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 265 of the 31st ultimo, I have the honour to inclose herewith to your Lordship two despatches from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum giving further details of the reported massacre of Armenians at Uspaghank, Eghgart, and Ishorer, in the Sasun district, and also a copy of a Memorandum which has been sent to me, there is reason to believe, by the Armenian Patriarch, and of the report of the occurrences sent to the Imperial Government by Ali Pasha, Military Commandant at Bitlis, under whose orders the outrage was committed.

I spoke yesterday very seriously to the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the horrible inhumanity, as well as the political danger, of allowing a cruel and bloodthirsty officer to wreak such vengeance on a number of inoffensive villagers, who, at most, could only be accused of harbouring some insurrectionary agents, if even so much.

I showed his Excellency the Memorandum I had received, and told him that I understood a similar document had been sent to the other Embassies, and I pointed to the account given by Ali Pasha of his attack on the church as in striking similarity to the atrocity at Bakak in 1876, which had horrified and shocked the civilized world. The Pasha stated that he had only found three dead bodies inside the church, but it was ridiculous to suppose that a large military force would have had recourse to fire if the church were only defended by three persons, of whom one was a woman, and the other a child. The presumption was that there had been a horrible and inhuman sacrifice of life, and that the bodies of the defenders were charred and unrecognizable. It was possible that the number of victims was exaggerated, but there was only too much reason to fear that they numbered over 200.

I said that it was his Excellency's duty to report the full facts of this horrible incident, as far as he knew them, to the Sultan, with a view to such exemplary punishment being inflicted on Ali Pasha as would deter others from similar outrages against humanity and civilization.

I further drew his Excellency's attention to the very significant remark made by one of my colleagues, who had, I understood, also made strong representations on the subject, to the effect that it was another proof of the inability of the Ottoman Government to prevent such atrocities and to maintain anything like order in those districts.

His Excellency was probably aware, I said, that on Saturday the Sultan had sent for my First Dragoman, and begged him to ask me to contradict the reports of the massacre which had appeared in the English papers, but that, with the information before me, I could only reply that I had forwarded the report furnished to me by his Excellency, while waiting for fuller and more precise information as to the exact facts. Apart, however, from the atrocity of the incident, it was of evil augury to hear from Aleppo and other parts of the interior that there was great uneasiness felt by the Christians, and that the appointment of Enis Pasha as Vali of Aleppo was



interpreted as a sign that an anti-foreign or anti-Armenian policy was approved by the Government.

The Minister seemed greatly disturbed at my remarks, and barely attempted to defend the action of Ali Pasha. On the contrary, he seemed anxious to know what advice I recommended the Porte to give the Sultan. I said that nothing short of an inquiry, under the auspices of some officials in whom foreigners and Christians had confidence, followed by the severe punishment of the delinquents, would be satisfactory.

His Excellency rather spoke as if it might be well to send the British Consul to make an inquiry on the spot, but I did not take the hint, my view being that, although I had no doubt that Major Maunsell could discover the truth, I questioned whether proper punishment would be inflicted on the guilty, and I did not see my way to insist at this moment on effect being given to his demands. If it were true that the villagers of Uspaghank have been exterminated, he had no one on whose behalf to intercede, and, all things considered, I thought it more likely that punishment would be inflicted if the report were drawn up by some Ottoman official who knew that the Sultan was ready to make an example in order to escape the opprobrium of an atrocity which, in its main characteristics, seems little behind those of 1894.

The Minister said that he would report my representations to the Sultan, and he quite saw that unless serious measures were at once taken to mark His Majesty's disapproval, foreign Governments would be little inclined to send Special Missions to congratulate His Majesty on his jubilee.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure 1 in No. 90.

*Consul Lamb to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 9.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, July* 29, 1900.

I REGRET to have to inform your Excellency that there is reason to fear that the unfortunate district of Sasun has again been the scene of a cold-blooded massacre, similar in nature to those which shocked all Europe in the autumn of 1894.

According to the account which I have received, Ali Pasha, the Commandant of Bitlis, who, I believe, was quite recently promoted to the rank of Ferik, arrived in Mush on the 26th June, giving out that he was on his way to Constantinople, but after collecting a large number of Kurds, together with detachments of regular troops from Mush, Bitlis, Diarbekir, and elsewhere, he proceeded to Sasun, and surrounded the three villages of Uspaghank, Eghgart, and Tshorer, which were sacked and destroyed on the 14th instant,* over 500 persons being massacred.†

I am endeavouring to obtain confirmation of this intelligence, but have little hope but that in its main essentials it will prove to be correct.

I had the honour to telegraph to your Excellency yesterday to the above effect.

It had come to my knowledge for some weeks past that small bodies of troops were being moved from Kharput, Palou, Diarbekir, and Bitlis in the direction of Mush, but I had been unable to discover their actual destination. It is probably these detachments which were employed by Ali Pasha in the manner described, the pretext for his action being presumably the presence, either real or suspected, of insurrectionary agents in the villages in question.

The village of Uspaghank is shown as Spagank on the sketch map accompanying Mr. Vice-Consul Hampson's despatch of the 18th August, 1895, and printed at p. 202 of "Turkey No. 1 (1895)" (Part I). The other two are doubtless identical with the Ergank and Zorir of Mr. Hampson, and the Ergart and Tsorir of the Report of the Consular Delegates at p. 162 of the same Blue Book. They all three belong to the Caza of Sasun, in the Mush Sandjak of Bitlis Vilayet, and they are estimated to have contained between them ninety-five houses, representing a population of over 1,000 souls.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HARRY H. LAMB.

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* Other accounts say, on 17th.

† 400 to 500.

Inclosure 2 in No. 90.

*Consul Lamb to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 10.)

*Erzeroum, July* 30, 1900.

Sir,

I REGRET to say that, though his Excellency the Vali declares himself to be entirely without information, the statements concerning a renewal of massacres in the Talori district of the Sasun Caza, as reported to your Excellency in my preceding despatch of the 28th instant, have been confirmed to me from a variety of sources.

The authorities of Bitlis, it is said, profess to have discovered the presence of insurrectionary agents in the village of Uspaghank, and that village has accordingly been entirely, and the neighbouring villages of Eghgart and Tshorer partially, destroyed.

From 400 to 500 villagers are stated to have been massacred, though it is very probable that the first figures may, as usual, prove to be exaggerated.

The villages of Semal, Shenik, and Ghelighuzan, which were sacked and destroyed in August 1894, and partially rebuilt in the following year, are reported to have been surrounded by a military cordon, but whether this measure has been taken to preserve them from further devastation at the hands of the Kurds, or merely as a preliminary to their organized destruction, is at present uncertain.

I had the honour to telegraph to your Excellency this morning to the above effect.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HARRY H. LAMB.

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Inclosure 3 in No. 90.

*Memorandum by the Armenian Patriarch.*

SPAGHANK est un village Arménien 150 âmes, dans le district de Sassoun, pas très loin de Talvorik, ayant pour habitants des braves montagnards respectés en quelque sorte par les Kurdes mêmes. L'année dernière le 19 (31) Octobre, 1899, une bande de Kurdes des tribus de Khian, de Pekrau, et autres avait attaqué le dit village pour le piller. Les Arméniens, soutenus par leurs voisins, avaient réussi à s'opposer à ces bandits, en tuer quatre Kurdes, blesser quelques autres, et reprendre 200 moutons environ sur les 300 enlevés par les Kurdes.

Les autorités de Guindje avait envoyé alors sur les lieux le Commandant de la Gendarmerie, avec le Chef Kurde, Houssein, de Khoulp, lesquels avaient réussi par des manières fausses à arrêter deux prêtres et sept Notables Arméniens, sans toucher les Kurdes et les conduire à Guindje. Un des prêtres et cinq des Notables avaient été relâché. Plus tard, un des Notables, Kaspar Tarpin, avait pu évader; le prêtre Kaprûl et le Notable Stépan Tregan étaient retenus en prison.

Ces précédents ont leur valeur pour l'explication des derniers événements. Les Kurdes ne faisaient que faire parvenir des nouvelles alarmantes aux autorités de Mouch et de Bitlis, sur la présence et sur la force des Arméniens révolutionnaires dans le district de Sassoun.

Le 3 (16) Juillet, le village était cerné par les hommes de Bercher-Khalil et de Keur-Selo, Chefs des tribus Kurdes de Pekran et de Khian; ils étaient accompagnés par Husni Effendi, Commissaire de Police, et par une colonne de soldats réguliers. Ali Pacha, Commandant Militaire de Bitlis, était venu sur les lieux depuis le 1er (14) Juillet. Les habitants de Spaghank, par un mouvement habituel, cherchant d'abord se défendre, mais leurs efforts sont devenus inutiles. Les habitants ont été passés à fil d'épée, les maisons brûlées, en y jétant du pétrole. Le prêtre, octagénaire, Boghos, s'était réfugié dans l'église avec sa famille, onze personnes en tout, ou dix-huit d'après les autres. L'église est brûlée également avec tout le monde qui était dedans; ceux qui cherchaient s'enfuire ont été rejoints et massacrés. On dit qu'il n'existe plus que trois individus du village Spaghank, aujourd'hui entièrement détruit et rayé. Il y a des victimes aussi des villages voisins Eghart et Tzorar et quelques maisons brûlées à Khidan.



La présence d'une bande de révolutionnaires à Spaghart n'a d'autres bases que les assertions de Kurdes; l'opposition rencontrée était la conséquence de la défense légitime contre l'agression des Kurdes; peut-être aussi cette fois les braves habitants de Spaghank aurait repoussé l'agression s'ils avaient à faire contre les Kurdes seuls.

Le Notable Arménien, Magar, Ress ou Chef du village de Spaghank et qui avait été l'année passée à la tête des Arméniens contre les Kurdes, a été soigneusement recherché; et quand on n'a pas pu le saisir on a pris sa femme enceinte, enlevé d'abord le fœtus, et tué ensuite la mère à coups de poignards.

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Inclosure 4 in No. 90.

*Le récit d'Ali Pacha, Commandant Militaire de Bitlis, sur les événements de Sassoun, à son retour de ce district, le* 7 (20) *Juillet*, 1900.

ÉTANT signalé aux autorités civiles et militaires de Bitlis la présence d'une bande de plus de 100 brigands Arméniens dans les montagnes de Sassoun, Ali Pacha se trouve obligé à partir en personne avec des détachements de troupes pris aux garnisons des villes environnantes.

Il arrive en premier lieu a Talvorik, village Arménien entièrement tranquille; il s'assure de la conduite régulière de ces villageois, il leur loue leur conduite et leur fidélité et il apprend en outre que la bande annoncée n'avait plus de 23 trois [*sic*] personnes armées.

En arrivant à Geleguzan, autre gros village Arménien, et y fait des recherches comme aussi dans les petits villages environnants et il rencontre à Aghpi une étable déserte où il y avait six lits formés de bois ordinaire, deux cartouches de fusils et des trous pour fusil pratiqués autour dans les murs. Il fait brûler cette étable, qui lui semblait être un refuge de brigands.

De là il marche vers les montagnes Sib, au-dessus desquelles se trouve le village Sibgan, en Arménien Spaghank, dans une position inexpugnable. Le village n'avait que six maisons Armeniennes avec une église d'une construction plutôt solide.

Ceux qui se trouvaient dans le village ou plutôt les brigands qui s'étaient réfugiés dans le dit village, commencent à tirer sur les troupes, et le Commandant ordonne une attaque en règle. Une partie des Arméniens est tuée sur les lieux, les autres se mettent en fuite et trois d'entre eux entrent dans l'église et commencent à tirer contre les soldats et les Kurdes. En voyant l'impossibilite de prendre l'église, on ramasse du bois et de l'herbe autour de l'église, et on y met le feu pendant des heures jusqu'à ce que ceux qui étaient dedans sont asphyxiés. On entre alors dans l'église, et on y trouve morts trois révolutionnaires, un prêtre, une femme, et un enfant de 13 ans.

Ali Pacha affirme que dans toute cette bagarre il y a eu seulement seize Arméniens tués, parmi lesquels il déplore la perte involontaire de l'enfant et de la femme; quant au prêtre, il le croit connivant avec les brigands qui auraient eu ainsi seulement treize morts, le reste ayant pu se sauver. De l'autre côté on dit qu'il y a eu cinq soldats et deux Kurdes tués et quelques blessés.

On ajoute qu'on a pu séquestrer des lettres compromettantes sur les cadavres des Arméniens.

Ali Pacha affirme qu'il a fait tout son possible pour ne pas laisser aux Kurdes la liberté d'action, et qu'il a pris avec lui un très petit nombre de Kurdes; qu'il a gracié un certain Atam, révolutionnaire Arménien qui s'était constitué à Geleguzan. Il croit que les centres des révolutionnaires sont dans les villages de Geleguzan, Aghpi, Khidan Chenik, Semal Guermab; il est convaincu que le gros de ces révolutionnaires est dorénavant dispersé et il a annoncé qu'on va établir des corps de garde à Geleguzan, à Chenik-Semal, à Guermab, et à Talvorig.

*Le* 7 (20) *Juillet*, 1900.

No. 91.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received August* 21.)

(No. 57.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, August* 21, 1900.

SPAGHANK massacre.

My telegram No. 56 of the 19th instant.

I have received a further message from the Sultan, through the Foreign Minister, informing me of the dismissal of Ali Pasha, who was in command of the troops at Spaghank.

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No. 92.

*The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 173.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, August* 23, 1900.

THE Turkish Chargé d'Affaires communicated to Mr. Villiers, at an interview on the 20th instant, the substance of telegrams from the Porte and the Palace, which were to the effect that a Commission had been appointed to inquire into the reported massacre of Armenians in the Sasun district.

Mr. Villiers informed Hamid Bey that your Excellency had already reported this to me.

Hamid Bey then referred to the language used in some of the London newspapers with regard to the renewal of Armenian atrocities. He said that he had not received any instructions on the subject, but that he felt sure the Sultan would be glad if I would send some notice to the press to calm public opinion.

Hamid Bey was informed to-day, by my direction, that I did not think it possible to send such a notice as he suggested to the press. It was also specially pointed out to him that Her Majesty's Government are not in any way responsible for the statements which appear in the London newspapers.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

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No. 93.

*Hamid Bey to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received August* 24.)

*Ambassade Impériale de Turquie, Londres,*
M. le Marquis, *le* 23 *Août*, 1900.

POUR faire suite à mes dernières conversations avec Sir Thomas Sanderson et l'Honorable Francis H. Villiers, au sujet des récents événements survenus près de Sassoun, j'ai l'honneur de transmettre à votre Seigneurie les renseignements complémentaires que je suis chargé par mon Gouvernement de lui adresser sur cette affaire.*

Les prêtres des églises de Sassoun et les Notables Arméniens de cette ville, ont opposé aux publications erronées de certains journaux un démenti formel dans une Déclaration qu'ils ont remise aux autorités Impériales, et dans laquelle ils affirment sous leur signature qu'aucun massacre de femmes et d'enfants n'a eu lieu à Sebganik.

La Sublime Porte se réserve en outre de me communiquer une copie de la dite Déclaration, que je me ferai un devoir de soumettre à votre Seigneurie dès que ce document me sera parvenu.

J'ai, &c.
(Signé) A. HAMID.

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* Not printed.



No. 94.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received August* 27.)

(No. 292.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, August* 16, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 180 of the 22nd May, and to previous correspondence respecting Russian influence in Syria, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, reporting that the Czar has conferred upon the Vali, Nazim Pasha, the Grand Cordon of the White Eagle.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure in No. 94.

*Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 67.)
Sir, *Damascus, August* 4, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that His Imperial Majesty the Czar has conferred on the Vali, Nazim Pasha, the Grand Cordon of the White Eagle "in consideration of his distinguished services." The "services" in question have been rendered to the Russian Government in the person of their Consul-General, M. Bélaieff, who, in his work of establishing "native" ecclesiastical influence in this province to the exclusion of the "Greek" clerical party and their adherents, has always found a staunch ally and supporter in the Vali, of whom he invariably speaks—as, indeed, he should—in the highest terms.

Nazim Pasha has not yet yet been authorized to accept and wear his new decoration, but it is not anticipated that the Imperial sanction will be refused.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

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No. 95.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received August* 20.)

(No. 293.)
My Lord, *Therapia, August* 16, 1900.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 54 of the 13th instant, reporting the attack made upon Major Maunsell by Kurds, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that I have just received a telegram from him, stating that the Government are doing all in their power to catch and punish his assailants.

I should be glad if your Lordship took an opportunity to express to the Turkish Ambassador your satisfaction at the prompt action of the Ottoman authorities in the matter.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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No. 96.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received August* 27.)

(No. 296.)
My Lord, *Therapia, August* 19, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 285 of the 14th instant, and to my telegram No. 56 of to-day's date, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that the Minister for Foreign Affairs sent me yesterday the following message from His Majesty in regard to the reported massacre of Armenians at Spaghank, in the Talori district.

Whilst His Majesty was still convinced that no excesses had been committed by the troops at Spaghank and that the intelligence forwarded by the British, French, German, and Austrian press was false, His Majesty had, nevertheless, decided upon having an

inquiry made into the alleged irregularities. The local authorities might well have been intrusted with this inquiry, as they were not involved and might be counted upon to give an impartial account of the affair, but His Majesty had, nevertheless, decided to send a Special Commission, which would leave in a day or two, composed of civil, judicial, and military officials. The result of the inquiry would be made known, and if the facts were as stated the guilty would be punished. His Majesty disapproved of any oppression of one class of his subjects by the other and made no distinction in the right of all his subjects to protection.

These are fair assurances if properly carried out, but it remains to be seen how far the composition of the Special Commission will inspire confidence in those who have the cause of humanity and civilization as well as the real interests of the Ottoman Empire at heart, and I am sorry to say that past experience does not encourage sanguine hopes of an impartial inquiry or the exemplary punishment of the guilty officials.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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No. 97.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received August* 27.)

(No. 300.)
My Lord, *Therapia, August* 22, 1900.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 57 of yesterday's date, I have the honour to report that the Minister for Foreign Affairs sent Nouri Bey to the Embassy on the 20th instant to give me the following further message from the Sultan in answer to my representations, as reported to your Lordship in my despatch No. 285, respecting the reported massacre at Spaghank :—

"The Commission, which will inquire into the incidents at Sasun will leave as soon as it is ready. In the meantime, Ali Pasha, Commandant at Bitlis, who was in command of the troops, has been dismissed, and should the Commission report that he or others are guilty, they will be punished in accordance with the requirements of the law."

His Majesty trusts that I will report the above to Her Majesty's Government, by telegraph, as a proof of his sincere desire to take measures to preserve order and tranquillity in the Empire, and of the good intentions of the Imperial Government.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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No. 98.

*The Marquess of Salisbury to Hamid Bey.*

Sir, *Foreign Office, August* 27, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your note of the 23rd instant, communicating information which you have received from your Government in regard to the report that a massacre of Armenians has taken place in the district of Sasun.

I have, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

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No. 99.

*The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 176.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, August* 29, 1900.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 285, Confidential, of the 14th instant, relative to the recent massacre of Armenians in the Sasun district.

I approve the language held by you to the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs on the subject.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

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No. 100.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received August* 31.)

(No. 54.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, August* 31, 1900.

MAJOR MAUNSELL, Vice-Consul at Van, telegraphs that he was attacked by Kurds while travelling near Elk. They fired upon him from the neighbouring hills, and he managed with difficulty to bring off his party with loss of his baggage. His Dragoman was wounded.

On my representation to the Porte, instructions have been sent to the Vali ordering the arrest and punishment of the offenders and restoration of the baggage.

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No. 101.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received September* 3.)

(No. 301.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, August* 24, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 280 of the 11th instant, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from the British Consular Agent at Mosul on the subject of the consecration of the recently-elected Chaldean Patriarch.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure in No. 101.

*Mr. Rassam to Acting Consul-General Melvill.*

(Translation.)
Sir, *Mosul, July* 24, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to inform you that after the Bishop of Sa'art was elected Patriarch by the Chaldean Bishops, as reported in my letter No. 12, dated the 10th instant, they fixed the following Sunday for his consecration. On Saturday evening, the day previous, his Excellency the Vali sent an order to the Bishops not to perform the ceremony, but they paid no attention. On Sunday morning the necessary arrangements for the consecration had been made, and the Bishops in their vestments, with the Latin Delegate and the French Consul in uniform, entered the church of Miskinta. Meanwhile, some respectable members of the community tried to prevent the Bishops from carrying out their intention, pointing out that this was against the order of the Government, and contrary to the usage of the community. To this the Bishops did not listen, but they, fearing a disturbance among the community, postponed the consecration, and all returned to their homes. This morning (Tuesday) all the Bishops, the French Consul, and the Delegate met in the same church, and consecrated Mar Emmanuel without obtaining the Porte's permission, but with the assistance of the French Ambassador at Constantinople. After the consecration a telegram from the Grand Vizier reached his Excellency, ordering him to prevent the convocation of the Bishops for the purpose of the election. Upon this the Vali summoned the Bishops to come to him to communicate this order to them. I do not know what will happen now, but I will inform you of anything that does.

The Maktubchi (Secretary) of this vilayet has been transferred to Diarbekir, for which place he has already left. The Secretary from Diarbekir, called Elias Sami Effendi, replaces him.

Last Saturday an order was received dismissing the Tabour Aghassi (Commandant of Police). This was done at the instance of the Vali, who accused him of receiving bribes, and reported him as being unfit for the post. A Major from Scutari will shortly replace him.

In compliance with an order from the Sublime Porte, the authorities here have commenced to collect voluntary contributions from Moslems towards the cost of

constructing a railway to the Hedjaz. The total amount collected in Kerkook is £ T. 1,500, and probably £ T. 2,500 will be collected in Mosul and its provinces, as all the Government employés are to contribute one month's pay, besides the merchants and the rich people, according to their means.

(Signed) NIMRUD RASSAM.

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No. 102.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received September* 1.)

(No. 305.)
My Lord, *Therapia, August* 27, 1900.

IN my despatch No. 296 of the 19th instant, I reported that the Minister of Foreign Affairs had informed me, by desire of the Sultan, that His Majesty had decided to send a Commission to investigate the circumstances of the recent excesses at Spaghank.

The Commission has now been appointed, and left for Bitlis last Friday. As far as I can at present judge its composition is satisfactory. It consists of a General of Brigade, Enver Pasha, an official from the Ministry of Justice, Mehmed Effendi, and a Secretary.

I know nothing of Mehmed Effendi, but General Enver Pasha is regarded as an intelligent and capable man. He filled the post of Governor of Volo during the occupation of Thessaly, and Colonel Ponsonby, who met him at that time, speaks highly of his character, testifying to the admirable order and discipline maintained among the 70,000 troops in his district.

I have, &c.
(For the Ambassador).
(Signed) G. BARCLAY.

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No. 103.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received September* 3.)

(No. 307.)
My Lord, *Therapia, August* 28, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 249 of the 18th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a telegram which, after consultation with my colleagues, I have addressed to the Acting Consul at Aleppo in reply to an inquiry received from him as to what official visits he should pay on the anniversary of the Sultan's accession.

Similar instructions have been sent by the other Embassies to their respective Consulates in Aleppo.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure in No. 103.

*Sir N. O'Conor to Acting Consul Falanga.*

(Telegraphic.) *Therapia, August* 25, 1900.

YOU should abstain in concert with your colleagues, who will receive similar instructions, from calling upon Ennis Pasha on the Sultan's fête. On assuring yourself discreetly that you will be received, you should call or leave card on Military Commandant and Muavin. You should illuminate or testify in any other customary manner in order to show that your attitude towards Vali is purely personal and not directed against Sultan or Ottoman Government.

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No. 104.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received September* 10.)

(No. 312.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September* 1, 1900.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 54 of the 13th ultimo I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting in detail the recent attack made upon him and his party by Kurds near Elk.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure in No. 104.

*Major Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 33.)
Sir, *Van, August* 14, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to report that, with your Excellency's permission, I left recently for Shattakh, but I heard at the last moment some news which decided me to push on a few days further to see Mr. Browne at Julamerk.

Knowing that along the direct line of road the Hartoshi Kurds were quarrelling among themselves, I determined to make a wider sweep to the south-west, reaching Julamerk by a longer way.

On the 8th August I passed through Elk, formerly in the caza of Beit-es-Shebab, which latter has now been given up, and the Kaïmakam withdrawn a few yards back, the district thus being under no direct control of Government; but the same might be said of much of the hill country south of the Bohtan River.

Towards evening I halted near some tents of the Zshiriki Kurds, whom I could shortly see were a band of plunderers ready to attack any one that came in their way.

One of the Headmen, Kokel by name, seized my rifle lying on the ground near my Dragoman, who quickly took it away from him.

It was then fully explained to them that I was the English Consul, &c., and he then expressed contrition, becoming very friendly; but I still had suspicions of his conduct.

Part of his conversation may give a clue to reasons of the subsequent attack. He said:—

"A few years ago there was a Kaïmakam in Beit-es-Shebab, but he was withdrawn, and there is no Government here now, and we can do what we like.

"Last year we plundered a large number of sheep from Tiari Christians; they appealed to your (English) Government, and it could do nothing to help them."

This last was an allusion to generally accepted idea that the English are the protectors of the Nestorians, owing partly to Mr. Browne being in Kochannes.

Our party consisted of three zaptiehs, dragoman, two cavasses and myself, with the muleteers, &c. Besides the rifles of the zaptiehs I had two Lee-Metford cavalry carbines.

We remained on the watch all night expecting an attack, as I heard that in addition to these tents there were other camps of the Gavdan and Zshiriki a short distance away, the two tribes being closely allied.

An attempted attack was made by some twenty men coming out of the tents close by, but it being bright moonlight, and seeing us well prepared, they retired.

When loading up in the morning a rifle was stolen from a zaptieh, who had rested it on a stone while he turned to attend to his horse, the thief disappearing in a moment down a stony ravine.

The guides now refused to start until the rifle was found and one of their number returned from the pursuit; the whole proceeding being evidently designed to cause delay and enable them to perfect their plans for attack. I therefore started without guides, taking a certain track which appeared to be in the required general direction. The road towards Julamerk, about which I had been inquiring, lay in a slightly different direction, and I learnt subsequently that the hills along it were occupied, and we could not possibly have got through in safety.

We had not gone far when I noticed that the crest of a rocky hill to my right was

occupied by twenty-five men, who opened fire and then began to descend towards us, while another band, led by Kokel, followed us up from the tents we had just left.

By taking up a position on the crest of the pass I was able to cover the passage of the baggage in safety, and gain time for it to get towards another small position in rear.

But at this moment, my Dragoman, M. Sbordoni, who was using the other carbine, was wounded by a bullet through the fleshy part of the right upper arm, and rendered unable to continue firing.

The time lost in getting him on his horse and the rough nature of the ground gave the Kurds opportunity to close up, and we were obliged to retire to the second position a little beyond the point the baggage had then reached.

We gained the crest and commenced to cover the ascent of the baggage, when the muleteers and servants broke and fled, leaving the animals standing in a small basin about 100 yards from my position, while the Kurds lined the low hills on the far side. The zaptiehs were absolutely useless and disappeared to some distant hills, firing aimlessly therefrom.

I remained with my cavass, Bilail, who supplied me with cartridges, and found with my magazine carbine I could prevent any Kurds descending to get near the baggage, and shot two who made the attempt.

This lasted for about twenty minutes, and the cavass offered to descend unarmed and drive the mules up the ascent, but, considering the number of Kurds round the far side of the basin I would not permit him to make the attack, as he would certainly have been killed at such short range.

I may mention that the other cavass was assisting M. Sbordoni.

The Kurds worked round through the ravines on either hand, and finding myself almost surrounded, I was obliged to draw off, leaving the baggage in their hands. I collected my servants and muleteers, &c., in one party and continued our way.

I now found the Kurds had worked right round and attacked M. Sbordoni, one seizing his horse and leaving him on the ground.

Fortunately, I came across the Kurd riding the horse, who at once threw down his arms and surrendered, giving up the horse.

We continued without further molestation to the tents of Hajji Agha, the Chief of the Hastoshi Kurds, with whom was a small detachment of regular troops assisting him to arrange a quarrel with his brother, Muhammad Agha.

I estimate that the number of attacking Kurds was about 100 of both Gavdan and Zshiriki, as their tents were not far from each other and undoubtedly messengers were sent to all neighbouring tents to join in a general attack. The names of the ringleaders whom I can personally recognize are:—

Kokel
Simo Binaya } all of Zshiriki tribe.
Choli Agha

And the following names were given me by Hajji Agha as the chief men of the Gavdan in tents close by the place of attack:—

Ubaid Agha, Chief of Gavdan.
Shahbaz
Tatar } his sons.
Kelash
Khidr Jawshin
Derbaz Ali
Ismaïl Abo Kelbi } all Gavdan Kurds.
Hamo Shketto
(Braderi) Jawshin

I have asked that the above twelve be brought in here as prisoners and that a battalion, at least, be sent to occupy the district until the baggage is brought in.

The Vali is acting energetically and is not to blame for the occurrence.

I may mention that there was no provocation to attack on our part. I have been travelling now for some five years in all parts of this country, and have not experienced any such conduct on the part of the Kurds before.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

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No. 105.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received September* 10.)

(No. 317.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September* 4, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 312 of the 1st instant, I have the honour to report that, according to intelligence received this morning by telegraph from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, the ringleaders of the recent attack on his party have been captured and the animals and most of the baggage taken from him on that occasion have been recovered.

Major Maunsell adds that the fighting between the Turkish troops and the brigands is still continuing.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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No. 106.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received September* 10.)

(No. 318.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September* 4, 1900.

IN my despatch No. 521 of the 8th November, 1899, I reported to your Lordship regarding the imprisonment of certain Armenians who had acted as agents for the distribution of relief funds contributed in England and America.

These men were, after long delays, put on their trial some weeks ago, and the proceedings resulted in the release of all but three. These were sentenced to three years' imprisonment, but in consequence of the repeated representations of this Embassy, their names were included in the list submitted by the Minister of Justice to the Sultan, on the occasion of the Jubilee, as deserving the Imperial clemency, and I am now happy to be able to report that they have received His Majesty's pardon.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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No. 107.

*The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 188.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, September* 10, 1900.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 307 of the 28th August last, relative to the attitude of the European Consuls towards Ennis Pasha, the new Vali of Aleppo, on the Sultan's Accession Day.

I approve the instructions sent by you to Her Majesty's Acting Consul at Aleppo in this matter.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

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No. 108.

*Mr. Spring-Rice to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received September* 17.)

(No. 84.)
My Lord, *Gulhek, August* 21, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that several disturbances have lately occurred on the Turco-Persian frontier.

At the end of June a serious raid of Persian Kurds took place near Serai on the Azerbaijan frontier. Two villages were pillaged. On the arrival of Turkish troops the Kurds were driven back and their leaders killed. Fifteen Turkish Kurds were killed, as well as a Turkish captain and three regulars.

I spoke to the Mushir-ed-Dowleh on the subject, who naturally laid the blame on

the Turks. It appears, however, from reports received from Her Majesty's Consul at Tabreez that disorders have been brewing for some time, and that the Persian authorities have not been able to take the necessary precautions.

His Excellency informed me that the Persian Government would send an official to the frontier to confer with the Turkish authorities and arrange for a proper inquiry. He asked me to communicate with Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, expressing the hope that Her Majesty's Government would be able in a friendly way to use their influence with the Porte in order to facilitate a settlement. This request he asked me to consider as unofficial.

I communicated accordingly with Sir N. O'Conor and the Turkish Embassy here.

On the 26th July the Mushir-ed-Dowleh sent to inform me that news had just been received of an incursion into Persian territory of a force of Turkish regulars with two guns, who had destroyed the village Soumar opposite Mendeli, which is about 60 miles east of Bagdad. His Excellency requested the friendly intervention of the British Government, which had been instrumental in fixing the frontier. The same request was communicated to the Russian Legation.

I called on the Mushir-ed-Dowleh, and informed him that I had communicated his request to Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople. He stated that he had inquired about a month previously as to the object of a large concentration of Turkish troops which, as he was informed, was taking place on the frontier near Bagdad. He had received a reassuring answer. He regarded the incursion of Turkish troops with cannon into Persian territory as a very serious incident.

I had consulted my Turkish colleague on the subject, and he had informed me that such raids would inevitably take place unless the Persian Government took military precautions. I spoke in this sense to the Mushir-ed-Dowleh, who stated, in reply, that he was unwilling to sanction the dispatch of Persian troops to the frontier, as this step would only aggravate matters. He subsequently communicated to me a long telegram from the local Governor, of which a précis is inclosed, giving details as to the incident, and laying the blame on the action of the Turkish authorities.

I have informed the Mushir-ed-Dowleh, in the sense of a telegram which I received from Sir N. O'Conor, that, in his Excellency's opinion, the Persian Government need not apprehend aggressive action on the part of the Turks; but that it was very advisable that the Persian Government should take steps to maintain order on the frontier.

His Excellency protested that this was his desire, but that the dispatch of troops was a dangerous step to take, and that he was adverse to it.

I have since learned from General Kosakovsky that he has been kept in the dark as to these incidents, and that the Commander-in-chief absolutely refuses to consult him as to military measures. The Turkish Military Attaché has also informed me that the reason why no military measures have been taken is that the Persian Government will not incur the necessary expense, and disposes of no effective force in the neighbourhood of the frontier. He assured me that unless the frontier tribes were kept in order the Turkish Government would be obliged to take energetic measures, that a new outbreak has now occurred on the Azerbaijan frontier and that it is possible that the question will shortly assume a serious aspect.

I asked the Mushir-ed-Dowleh to-day whether he could give me any further news.

He said he had telegraphed to Constantinople expressing his readiness to send an official to the frontier with an adequate force to report on the question and to confer with a Turkish Delegate. I observed that as long as the tribes on the Persian frontier were not kept under the control of regular troops there was always the fear of an outbreak; and the Turks could hardly be blamed for taking military precautions. He said he had telegraphed to the Governor of Arabistan to send troops to the frontier with stringent instructions to maintain order.

Unless these troops are paid they will not be a great improvement on the present local militia.

I have spoken to my Turkish colleague on the subject. He complains that he had warned his Government that it was likely another incursion would take place on the Urumiah frontier, as he had reason to know that while there were no cartridges at Kermanshah the Persians possess a considerable amount of ammunition in Azerbaijan. He had also heard that the Russian Consul-General at Tabreez is in constant communication with the Governor and the Kargusar.

What he feared has now taken place, and the Urumiah Kurds have raided into Turkish territory, where they have done a great deal of damage and outraged the family of the Sheikh Saduk, the most important chief of the neighbourhood.

In the present state of relations between Persia and Russia it is to be feared that if



these disorders continue the Persians will request the assistance of Russian troops or officers. The tribes will no doubt quiet down at the beginning of October, when the snows commence, but until then there is some danger of a serious incident. The Persians have no troops who can cope with the tribes, and, if the Turkish troops pursue the aggressors over the frontier, it is not impossible that in some form or other foreign interference may take place.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CECIL SPRING-RICE.

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Inclosure in No. 108.

*Précis of Report of Governor of Kermanshah to the Persian Government and from Davud Khan to the Governor.*

SOOMAI is a place in Persian territory opposite Mendeli, which latter belongs to Turkey. The water supply is shared between Soomai and Mendeli, and a dispute arose in consequence. The Turks sent regular troops to Soomai, who occupied the fort, destroyed the village, and the canals.

The Governor, on hearing of this, and having no regulars on the spot, sent to the Chief of the Kalhot tribe of Kurds asking for the dispatch of Davud Khan, who started at once for Soomai with 700 horsemen. On the way he heard that the place had been attacked and subsequently evacuated, and that the regulars had been withdrawn. On arrival at Soomai he demanded an inquiry, and proceeded to a spot on the frontier to confer with the Turkish authorities of Mendeli. During the conference his men were fired on, and several killed and wounded. Davud Khan then attacked and defeated the Turks, who took refuge in Mendeli. After this he received orders from the Governor to discontinue hostilities and return to his own village.

News has since been received that Turkish regulars are being sent up from Bagdad, and this has caused a dangerous excitement.

*Note.*—The Turkish Embassy states that the inhabitants of Mendeli have the right to the water of the Surma River; that they were forcibly deprived of this right, and accordingly took steps to break the sluices which prevented the flow of water on to their land.

The frontier has not yet been fixed, and it is claimed that the ownership of Surma is really still undetermined, and may be regarded as neutral territory.

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No. 109.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received September* 17.)

(No. 321.)
My Lord, *Therapia, September* 8, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 305 of the 27th ultimo, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that according to a telegram which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, which has been much mutilated in transmission, Major Maunsell seems inclined to believe that the number of killed at Spaghank has been, as I had surmised, considerably exaggerated, and that it does not exceed thirteen.

Major Maunsell, when telegraphing on the 4th, had no reliable information, but I understand that the Russian Vice-Consul, who made a journey to within a short distance of Spaghank, reckons even a less number.

The exact facts will no doubt be shortly known through the Armenian Patriarchate and the Turkish Delegate, Enver Pasha, who is highly spoken of in different quarters, and I shall not fail to inform your Lordship of any further information that reaches me.

I suggested to-day to the Russian Ambassador that our two Vice-Consuls should proceed to Spaghank simultaneously with Enver Pasha, but as the Russian Vice-Consul had already been on his way to Spaghank when he was obliged to return on account of hurting his foot, the Ambassador did not see his way to authorizing him to make a fresh journey, and I did not think it necessary or desirable to instruct Major Maunsell to go there alone.

In making this suggestion to the Russian Ambassador, who assured me that if it had been made before his Consul started on his recent journey, he would have been very glad to agree, I was prompted by a desire to show the interest taken by both Embassies in matters of this kind, in the hope of conducing generally to the protection of the Armenian population, while at the same time showing the Ottoman Government the interest taken in Armenian proceedings by the Russian as well as by Her Majesty's Government.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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No. 110.

*Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received September* 17.)

(No. 324.)
My Lord, *Therapia, September* 11, 1900.

WITH reference to previous correspondence respecting the recent attack by Kurds on Major Maunsell and his party, I have the honour to forward herewith copies of two despatches from Major Maunsell giving details of the punitive expedition dispatched by the Turkish authorities against the perpetrators of the outrage.

As I reported in my despatch No. 317 of the 4th instant, Major Maunsell has since telegraphed that the ringleaders have been captured, and that most of the baggage carried off by the Kurds has been recovered; and in a further telegram received this morning he gives further particulars showing the successful termination of the fighting between the Turkish troops and the Kurdish tribe concerned.

Several of the Kurds have been killed, and the rest routed. The captured ringleaders appear to number eight. These are now being conveyed to Van.

The prompt action of the Turkish authorities in dispatching this punitive expedition, and the energy which has marked its operations, deserve recognition, and I am sure the expression to the Turkish Ambassador of your Lordship's satisfaction would give much pleasure to the Ottoman Government.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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Inclosure 1 in No. 110.

*Major Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 33.)
Sir, *Van, August* 21, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to report, in continuation of my despatch No. 32 of the 14th August, that a squadron of cavalry under the command of a Colonel left Van for the scene of the attack on my caravan on the instant.

They were joined by 150 infantry from a post in Farashin on their route, making a total of 250 soldiers, which ought to be sufficient to deal with this small tribe.

They have received stringent orders from the Commandant here and also from Zekki Pasha, the Mushir at Erzinghian.

The Kaïmakam of the Khoshab Caza has also been sent to the scene of the attack to assist in capturing the persons implicated.

No news has yet arrived here of any results, but the district is some distance from telegraphic communication.

M. Sbordoni's wound is gradually healing.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

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Inclosure 2 in No. 110.

*Major Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor, No.* 27, *August* 27, 1900.

[Not yet received at Foreign Office.]

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No. 111.

*The Marquess of Salisbury to Mr. de Bunsen.*

(No. 201.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, September* 20, 1900.

I HAVE received Sir N. O'Conor's despatch No. 321 of the 8th instant relative to the reported massacre of Armenians at Spaghank.

His Excellency's action in the matter, and his communication to the Russian Ambassador on the subject, are approved by Her Majesty's Government.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

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No. 112.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received September* 24.)

(No. 328.)
My Lord, *Therapia, September* 16, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a translation of an address signed by inhabitants of the district of Sasun, which has been communicated to me by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, under orders from the Sultan, declaring the reports of a massacre at Spaghank to be false, the occurrences which gave rise to those reports being asserted to be merely part of a punitive expedition against certain brigands of the district.

This document is evidently the same as the Mazbata which forms the subject of the inclosed despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum.

Although I have but little doubt that the first rumours which reached Mr. Lamb as to the numbers killed at Spaghank, reported in my despatch No. 285 of the 14th August, were greatly exaggerated, the circumstances described by him as attending the preparation and signature of the present address must deprive it of all value as evidence of the alleged legitimate character of the proceedings of the Turkish troops.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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Inclosure 1 in No. 112.

*Address from the Inhabitants of the District of Sasun.*

(Translation.)

A REUTER Agent's telegram has been published in some of the papers under the heading of Armenian massacres. It has also been written that the Imperial troops under the command of the Governor of Bitlis, the General of Division, Ali Pasha, has destroyed as many as 200 people, men, women and children, inhabitants of the Armenian village of Spaghank in the Sasun district, it was said that the said village was burnt, and that the Kurds sided with the soldiers and that they attacked and sacked three other villages in that district.

It was alleged that the dispatch of troops to that village was made with the object of picking a quarrel. A real necessity is now felt to give a formal *démenti* to these statements and to declare the truth, it is desirable that measures should be taken for the guarantee of peace in face of this, and that it should be announced that there is no occasion for the loyal Armenian subjects to be rendered anxious by the reports published that under pretence of justice the Armenians of Spaghank had been made the object of aggression. Under the ægis of His Majesty the Sultan the welfare and happiness of his people are uninterruptedly promoted, and thanks to his kindness and favours, which gladden all hearts and brighten the eyes of his subjects whom he loves, the said subjects are overwhelmed with gratitude.

We consequently declare that the soldiers were sent by the said Ali Pasha, and that the operations they carried out consisted of steps taken to repel and punish the brigands who in some way or other had been impelled to go and entrench themselves in Spaghank. These soldiers did not indulge in any wanton or aggressive act towards men, women, or

children, and committed no excess in the other villages, and it is false in more respects than one that the Kurds took part in the punitive measures. The loyal Armenian nation is indebted to Ali Pasha and to the local authorities for the measures thus taken to insure tranquillity and security, and they should know that these and such like articles in the newspapers are got up and fabricated by ill-disposed people and is the work of spite merely. It is with the purpose of making this known that we have drawn up and forwarded this address.

Your humble, &c.

(Signed) Bishop of Monastir.
Bishop of Mishkih.
Priest of Mishkih.
Priest of Talhor.
Bishop of Konuk.
Bishop of Belikian.
Elder of the Village of Khanz, &c.

*August* 3 (16), 1316 (1900).

We, the undersigned, put our names to this address in order to affirm that the above-signed of the Caza of Sasun did really sign in that in truth no men, women or children were, as published in the newspapers, murdered in the said village, and that the measures taken consisted merely of punishments inflicted on the brigands who had entrenched themselves there, and that under the ægis of His Majesty the inhabitants of the Christian villages in general are quite free from aggression and are prosperous and flourishing, and continue to pray for the long life of His Majesty, and to work at their respective callings.

This we, the undersigned, certify :—

(The Administrative Council of the Liva of Mush.)

The signatures appended to this address have been approved by—

(Notables of Bitlis.)

These signatures are approved by me as being those of the Lay Council of Bitlis and the notables of the place.

(Bishop of the Armenians of Bitlis.)

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Inclosure 2 in No. 112.

*Consul Lamb to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 12.)

*Erzeroum, September* 1, 1900.

Sir,

WITH reference to the reported massacre at Spaghank, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that M. Tumansky, the Russian Vice-Consul at Van arrived in Bitlis about the 22nd ultimo, and proceeded on the following day in the direction of Sasun, being almost immediately followed by the Vali of Bitlis.

Before leaving the city, however, the latter functionary summoned before him six of the most prominent Armenians of Bitlis, and demanded their signatures to a Mazbata, declaring all rumours of massacres in the district in question to be false. On their objecting that they had no personal knowledge of the facts, the Vali ordered horses to be immediately prepared, and told the six Notables that if they were not convinced of the accuracy of his Mazbata they should at once proceed to the spot, under the escort which he would provide, in order to satisfy themselves as to the truth. The Armenians not unnaturally elected to sign at once, and the document, duly attested by the Murakhass, has, doubtless, been forwarded to Constantinople.

So completely do the Christians of that region appear to be terrorized, that I imagine it will prove extremely difficult to elicit trustworthy evidence, even on the spot itself.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HARRY H. LAMB.

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No. 113.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received September* 24.)

(No. 332.)

*Therapia, September* 18, 1900.

My Lord,

WITH reference to Sir N. O'Conor's despatch No. 321 of the 8th instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith a despatch from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting that though rumours, emanating from missionary sources at Bitlis, had reached him of a general massacre at Spaghank, he had, at the time of writing, been unable to obtain any confirmation of them. Major Maunsell's disbelief in the truth of such rumours is apparently shared by his Russian colleague, who, notwithstanding M. Zinowiev's statement to Sir N. O'Conor that his Vice-Consul had been prevented by an injury to his foot from reaching Spaghank, appears to have succeeded in visiting the scene of the alleged massacre.

I have, &c.

(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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Inclosure in No. 113.

*Major Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 38.)

*Van, September* 4, 1900.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that some time ago I heard reports from Bitlis and Mush that troops had been sent to Sasun with Ali Pasha, the Military Commandant, to punish a band of revolutionists, and I heard subsequently that thirteen of the latter had been killed near Mush.

At the same time from missionary sources from Bitlis, I heard that the affair was a general massacre involving the slaughter of 200 persons, women and children included, and the destruction of five villages.

I made several inquiries among Armenians and from other sources here, but I could find no confirmation of the story of a massacre, but they had heard that a band of revolutionaries had been killed near Mush. Several Armenians had received letters from Mush, and if anything serious had happened they certainly would have heard of it and would not have scrupled to tell me of it.

My Russian colleague left a short time ago for a visit to Bitlis and Sasun, and returned yesterday. He travelled through most of Sasun, and could find no confirmation whatever of a massacre having taken place. He gave me full details of his journey, and he carefully examined Spaghank, where the revolutionist band took refuge and were exterminated.

It appears that seven of them were traced thither, and when attacked took refuge in the church, from which they fired on the troops, and in which they were eventually killed. Spaghank altogether numbers only six houses.

He tells me that in passing through the Mush Plain he continued to receive circumstantial reports of massacre from the Armenians, and even after he had visited Spaghank they still affirmed that a great massacre had taken place there.

Last year I visited Bitlis and Mush under exactly similar circumstances when some revolutionists were destroyed at Zronk.

In Bitlis then I found the most circumstantial reports that five villages were destroyed, and Mr. Cole's orphan school and scholars at Mush was exterminated.

But on visiting Mush and Zronk, I found no massacre had taken place, and the reports to be absolutely untrustworthy.

Even after I had been to Zronk, the Armenians continued to insist on a massacre having occurred there.

For these reasons I hesitated to accept the present stories of massacre at Sasun without full confirmation, before I made a definite report to your Excellency on the subject.

I wrote privately to Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum telling him of the result of my inquiries here.

I had the honour of informing your Excellency of the substance of the above by telegraph.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

P.S.—I may mention also that Ali Pasha is an officer exceptionally impartial to Christians, as instanced by his quelling by his personal exertions what might have developed into a serious massacre at Bitlis in 1898.

He had been promoted before this occurrence to the rank of Ferik or Lieutenant-General, and as the command at Bitlis belongs to an officer of the rank of Liwa (Major-General), he has now left for Constantinople, through Erzingan, to take up some appointment in the Palace.

Salih Bey has been promoted Liwa at Bitlis to replace him; he is by no means such an intelligent man or so favourable to Christians.

F. R. M.

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No. 114.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received October* 1.)

(No. 334.)
My Lord, *Therapia, September* 22, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to transmit copy of a despatch from the Acting Consul-General at Beirut, reporting the occurrence of disturbances at Haifa. Your Lordship will perceive that in the course of their efforts to arrest the rioters, the police forced their way into the residence of Mr. Abela, the Acting British Vice-Consul, and besides doing some damage to his house, wounded his servant. Mr. Heathcote states that he has brought the matter to the notice of the Vali of the province, and that he has every reason to hope that his Excellency will take the necessary steps for the punishment of those responsible for this outrage, and for the prevention of such acts in the future. I have therefore thought it unnecessary to mention the matter to the Porte.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN

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Inclosure in No. 114.

*Acting Vice-Consul Heathcote to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 61.)
Sir, *Beirut, September* 13, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to report that on the night of the 30th ultimo a disturbance occurred at Haifa between some native Christians and the Turkish police and soldiers.

It appears that the German Vice-Consul has long demanded that natives should be prevented from walking about the German Colony and the quay built for the Emperor's visit during the night. A few days earlier the Chief of Police had turned away some native Christians from the quay and had arrested one of them, and in revenge for this a number of persons attacked the Chief of Police and five gendarmes on the night of the 30th.

The police took refuge in the German hotel, which was stoned by the Christians, two gendarmes being injured. Shots were fired, but apparently without result. The assailants were finally driven off by the Germans who came to the assistance of the police.

The German Consul-General has demanded satisfaction for the attack on the hotel and other German houses, and the punishment of the culprits.

The following day the authorities began to search for persons suspected of taking part in the disturbances. A number of arrests were made, but the Acting Vice-Consul informs me that almost all the persons arrested were innocent. The authors of the disturbance fled, and it is said that they are in the French hospital.

The police made a series of searches in the houses of persons suspected, quartering themselves in some cases in the houses of those who have fled, and acting generally in a high-handed and irregular way.

Among other houses, they entered that occupied by Mr. P. Abela, the Acting



British Vice-Consul, who was not then at home; disregarding the protests of his maid-servant, they forced the door, broke the windows, and wounded the servant; they found no one on the premises, where, as Mr. Abela reports, they remained for half-an-hour.

Mr. Abela complained to the Kaïmakam, who at first refused to believe him, but afterwards sent a soldier with him to his rooms, who found matters as he described.

On receiving Mr. Abela's report, I immediately brought the matter to the Vali's notice. His Excellency at once ordered Colonel Yahya Bey Shamâa, second in command of the gendarmerie of the vilayet, to proceed to Haifa to investigate the two cases, the disturbances and the violation of Mr. Abela's domicile. Yahya Bey sailed on the 4th September.

Mr. Abela informs me that he has had several interviews with him, in which the Colonel has promised all possible assistance, but, up to the present, I have not heard of his making any real inquiry into Mr. Abela's complaint.

On the 10th, owing, as I hear, to instructions from Constantinople, the Vali sailed for Haifa to investigate the whole matter himself, and I have as yet heard nothing of his Excellency's actions.

I do not think from all I hear that there was any deliberate intention of violating a British domicile; probably the officer in searching other houses in the quarter thought it necessary also to enter that occupied by Mr. Abela, and did not know or did not believe that it was the residence of a foreigner or of a foreign Representative.

The authorities here think that a certain Mirza Bey, of the gendarmerie, was the officer who entered Mr. Abela's house. This man is described as a hot-headed Circassian, who would be likely to pay little attention to private rights and the privileges of foreigners in carrying out his orders.

I have every reason to hope that the Vali will take efficient steps to punish those responsible for this violation of British rights, and to prevent the recurrence of any such acts.

Yesterday Nazim Pasha, Vali of Damascus, arrived here, and, after meeting the German Consul at the Government House, sailed for Haifa.

Considerable comment has been excited by the unusual measure of sending the Governor of a neighbouring province, especially as the Vali of Beirut is already on the spot. It is generally supposed that it is owing to Nazim Pasha's friendly relations with the German Emperor that he has been sent to Haifa.

The Moslems of the town are much excited at the attack by the Christians on the police. A large number of them met at the house of the President of the Municipality, whence they proceeded to the courtyard of the Government House, beating drums and singing and shouting against the Christians.

The latter were much alarmed, and their religious chiefs telegraphed to the Vali and to Constantinople for protection for their lives, and complaining of the violence employed by the police in their search for the culprits.

There is no doubt that great agitation and bitterness prevail among Christians and Moslems, but I have every hope that the presence of the Valis of Beirut and Damascus will suffice to restore order, and secure a satisfactory solution of the various questions involved.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. J. HEATHCOTE.

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No. 115.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received October* 1.)

(No. 140. Commercial.)
My Lord, *Therapia, September* 25, 1900.

WITH reference to Sir N. O'Conor's despatch No. 57, Commercial, of the 19th April, I have the honour to report that M. de Vandeuvre, a director of the Mersina-Adana Railway, called yesterday, with M. Pedrelli, a Constantinople lawyer, to renew the request of the Company for the intervention of Her Majesty's Embassy to prevent the encroachment of the projected German railway to Bagdad upon their country.

They informed me that the Sultan, after long resisting the German demand for a line to connect the Bagdad Railway with the sea at a point in the Gulf of

Alexandretta, had at last consented to the construction of a temporary line form Alexandretta to Marash or some other place on the projected main line, for the purpose merely of conveying the materials for the construction of the railway. This temporary line would, of course, become permanent, and the profits of the Anglo-French Company would be very seriously curtailed by the rivalry of another outlet to the sea within such a short distance.

Negotiations, they said, had long been carried on with the Germans to induce them to make Mersina their port and to connect at Osmaniye with the Mersina–Adana Railway which it was proposed to extend to that point. These proposals had now been finally rejected by the German Company, and the British and French investors in the local line were threatened with serious loss if their respective Embassies did not intervene by calling upon the Sultan to insist on an arrangement between the conflicting interests of the rival Companies.

I replied in the sense of Sir N. O'Conor's remarks to Mr. Pears, the English lawyer employed by the Mersina–Adana Railway, as reported in his Excellency's above-mentioned despatch.

The exact course of the new railway is still under discussion, and it was always certain that if the railway to Bagdad was ever constructed, there must be a port in connection with it at, or near, Alexandretta. I could not, therefore, agree with M. de Vandeuvre and his lawyer that the Imperial assent to the temporary line above referred to had altered the situation, and rendered it necessary for Her Majesty's Embassy to reconsider the whole question.

I could only repeat the advice already given that an agreement should still be sought with the German Company, and I reminded M. de Vandeuvre that Her Majesty's Ambassador had already more than once brought the matter to the attention of the German Ambassador.

I have since ascertained, in conversation with the French Chargé d'Affaires, that his Embassy takes a similar view of the case, and has declined to make a representation at the Palace on behalf on the Mersina–Adana Railway.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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No. 116.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received October* 1.)

(No. 340.) *Therapia, September* 26, 1900.

My Lord,

WITH reference to Sir N. O'Conor's despatch No. 324 of the 11th instant, I have the honour to transmit copy of a further despatch from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van reporting the recovery of the baggage animals and most of the baggage of which he had been robbed by the Kurds.

Major Maunsell says that the Vali promises to refund the value of the deficiencies which still remain, amounting to £ T. 170. He suggests that an indemnity of £ T. 200 should be obtained from the Ottoman Government on account of the Dragoman's wound, and that the two cavasses should receive some reward from Her Majesty's Government. A fee of £ T. 20 is also due to Dr. Ussher for attendance on Mr. Sbordoni.

I shall await your Lordship's instructions with regard to the above suggestions. On the one hand, it may be a bad precedent that a Consular officer should be attacked without an indemnity being subsequently demanded from the Government which professes to keep the peace in his district. Indemnities were exacted in the case of Mr. Consul Page, killed at Jeddah in 1859 or 1860, whose daughter, Mrs. Pilleau, still receives a Turkish pension, and in that of Mr. Richards, who was wounded just outside that town in 1895, when the British Vice-Consul was killed, the Ottoman Government paying 10,000*l*. Again, when Mr. Missir, Vice-Consul at Dedeagatch, was struck by a soldier while accompanying the French mails on board a steamer, Her Majesty's Embassy demanded £ T. 100 as compensation, in concert with the French Embassy. But the money was never obtained, and the claim has been latterly dropped by this Embassy, as it seemed to be a matter more closely concerning the French. Your Lordship will also remember that we have recently obtained indemnities for British Indian merchants robbed on the road between Jeddah and Mecca. A large indemnity



was demanded by Germany in the case of the recent assault on Dr. Belck near Van, but has not yet been paid.

There are, however, circumstances connected with the attack on Major Maunsell which make me hesitate to express an opinion in favour of demanding any considerable indemnity. Major Maunsell's despatches testify to the zeal and energy displayed by the Turkish authorities, both civil and military, in immediately pursuing the marauders, with the result that pack animals have been recovered with most of the booty, that eight of the ringleaders are on their way to Van for trial, and that the Vali has promised to make good the remaining losses. Her Majesty's Ambassador has suggested in two despatches, Nos. 293 and 324 of the 16th August and 11th September respectively, that the Ottoman Ambassador should receive an expression of your Lordship's thanks for the prompt action taken. Under these circumstances, it would appear perhaps ungracious to exact what would be regarded as a fine. It should also be borne in mind that the Vice-Consul was travelling with an escort of only three zaptiehs in a wild district from which the Kaïmakam had been withdrawn, and in which the Government had thus given up the attempt to exercise any direct control.

If any sum be demanded, it should be, I think, strictly as compensation for the wounded Dragoman, as, indeed, Major Maunsell suggests. The wound was in the fleshy part of the arm, and required daily medical attendance for nearly a month. Your Lordship will perhaps think that £ T. 100 would sufficiently make good the injury received, and enable the victim to defray his doctor's bill. Mr. Block considers that a demand for this amount would have a fair prospect of being paid. It would, at any rate, maintain the principle that a claim of some sort or other follows naturally upon any assault committed against a British Consular officer or his escort. It is important, no doubt, that the Turkish Government should be made to understand that our Consuls must be protected wherever they may be, as at times, though it was not the case in the present instance, they are obliged, in the discharge of their duties, to pass through disturbed districts.

As regards Major Maunsell's proposal that the two cavasses should receive a gratuity out of British public funds, I venture to ask whether your Lordship would wish that a small present, say, £ T. 5 each, should be made to them as a mark of your appreciation of the contrast afforded by the courageous and soldierly behaviour of the cavasses as compared with the zaptiehs, who left their charge in the lurch at the first shot.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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Inclosure in No. 116.

*Major Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 39.)

Sir, *Van, September* 11, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to report that the baggage animals and most of the baggage stolen by Kurds in the recent attack have been recaptured and brought on here.

A number of small articles are still deficient.

My large tent was cut up into fragments, suitable for division among various members of the tribe, and is consequently useless.

Brass buttons were removed from my cavass' coat, under the impression that they were gold, and some brass screws from my sextant, apparently under the same impression.

I have forwarded to the Vali a list of deficiencies, amounting to £ T. 170, which he promises to refund.

One of the baggage animals died, and the others were much exhausted through want of food.

The Khoshab Kaïmakam, Fuad Bey, was early on the scene, and managed to recover the baggage before it was divided up among the tribesmen, but was unable then to capture the ringleaders, as the force with him was too small.

The Gavdan tribe, under Ubaid Agha, were the first to submit to Government, and do not appear to have participated in the attack, although I have not heard the final decision of the inquiry into the case yet.

The Zshiriki, who were the real culprits, held out strongly in various rocky positions, and almost induced the Mamkhoran, another turbulent robber tribe close by,

to join in, but these latter drew back on the appearance of reinforcements to the troops.

Two sections of the Zshiriki, after a struggle in which six Kurds were killed, gave in their submission, one section, with the ringleaders of the attack, still holding out.

These were pursued through an extremely rocky, difficult country, almost as far as Amadia, where they finally gave in their submission.

No mention is made of the exact number of Kurds killed in this encounter, but it is stated the losses were severe.

Eight ringleaders, all implicated in the attack on my caravan, were captured, and are now on their way into Van, and all resistance to the Imperial troops has ceased.

The Government also desires seven years' arrears of taxes from these tribes, and have seized a large number of sheep, mules, &c.

Some small additional portions of my baggage have also been recovered.

Shakir Agha, a Kurdish Chief of Norduz, and noted as the perpetrator of the Van massacres, got leave from the Commandant here, and proceeded to the scene with 100 horsemen. He appears to have been actuated with a new-found desire to avenge insults to Consuls, and fell upon Ubaid Agha and plundered him severely.

Altogether, these tribes have received a very severe lesson, and the effect is in every way excellent.

Certainly the Kurds will not lightly attack Consuls travelling in their districts again; the Government authority has been fully vindicated, and the surrounding country well rid of a prominent band of robbers.

I would venture to bring to your Excellency's notice the propriety of obtaining an indemnity (say, £ T. 200) from the Ottoman Government for Mr. Sbordoni's wound.

Also some reward from our Government to the two cavasses.

A fee of £ T. 20 is due to Dr. Ussher, of the American Mission, who attended daily on Mr. Sbordoni for nearly a month, but I am in doubt from whom to demand it.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

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No. 117.

*The Marquess of Salisbury to Mr. Spring-Rice.*

(No. 67.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, October* 1, 1900.

I HAVE received your despatch No. 84 of the 21st August, reporting on the disturbances which have lately occurred on the Turco-Persian frontier, and the inability of the Persian Government to maintain order on their side of the boundary.

I approve the language held by you to the Mushir-ed-Dowleh with regard to this matter.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

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No. 118.

*Foreign Office to Colonial Office.*

Sir, *Foreign Office, October* 4, 1900.

I AM directed by the Marquess of Salisbury to inform you that the Turkish Ambassador communicated yesterday the substance of a telegram from his Government on the subject of alleged proceedings of Armenians in Cyprus.

The Turkish Government are informed that Armenian agitators residing at Alexandria, Athens, and Cyprus have imported cannons, guns, and cartridges into Cyprus from England and America, with the intention of landing them at some place between Mersina and Selefke, for the purpose of creating disturbances in Turkish territory.

The Sultan is convinced that Great Britain will not allow Cyprus to be made a centre of Armenian agitation, and trusts that Her Majesty's Government will give the necessary instructions with a view to prevent such proceedings.



I am to suggest that the High Commissioner of Cyprus should be instructed by telegraph to inquire into the truth of this report, and to take such steps as may be possible to prevent any such attempts to incite insurrectionary movements in Turkey.

I am, &c.
(Signed) T. H. SANDERSON.

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No 119.

*The Marquess of Salisbury to Mr. de Bunsen.*

(No. 209.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, October* 5, 1900.

I HAVE received your despatch No. 140, Commercial, of the 25th ultimo, relative to a fresh request of the Mersina–Adana Railway Company for the intervention of Her Majesty's Embassy with a view to an arrangement between it and the German Company which is about to construct the railway to Bagdad.

Your language to the representatives of the Mersina–Adana Railway Company is approved.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

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No. 120.

*Colonial Office to Foreign Office.—(Received October* 8.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and is directed by the Secretary of State to transmit, for the information of the Marquess of Salisbury, with reference to the letter from his Department of the 4th instant, a copy of a telegram to Sir W. F. Haynes Smith, on the subject of alleged proceedings of Armenians in Cyprus.

*Downing Street, October* 6, 1900.

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Inclosure in No. 120.

*Mr. Chamberlain to High Commissioner Sir W. F. Haynes Smith.*

(Telegraphic.) *Downing Street, October* 5, 1900.

TURKISH Government have been informed that Armenians have imported cannon, guns, cartridges into Cyprus from England and United States America with intention of landing them somewhere between Mersina and Selefke for the purpose of creating disturbances in Turkey. Please inquire into truth of this report and take steps, as far as possible, to check any such movement.

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No. 121.

*The Marquess of Salisbury to Mr. de Bunsen.*

(No. 210.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, October* 12, 1900.

I HAVE received your despatch No. 340 relative to the recent attack by Kurds on Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van.

I have consulted Sir N. O'Conor in regard to the question of an indemnity for the wounded Dragoman, and I concur in your opinion that it will be sufficient if a sum of £ T. 100, to include £ T. 20 for medical attendance, can be obtained from the Turkish Government for M. Sbordoni.

It appears to me desirable that the Turkish Government should pay some compensation for the wounding of the Dragoman of a British Consular officer in a district in which they are responsible for public security.

On the other hand, there is no suggestion of complicity or negligence on the part of the Turkish authorities, who, on the contrary, have taken prompt and effective measures for the punishment of the persons concerned in the attack. Moreover, it

does not seem advisable to afford the Turkish Government a pretext for objecting to journeys of British Consular officers in outlying districts of Asiatic Turkey on the ground that the country is unsafe.

In these circumstances, it will be better that your application to the Porte for the payment of £T. 100 as compensation for M. Sbordoni should be made verbally, so as to avoid, if possible, entering into official correspondence with it on the subject.

I have applied to the Lords of the Treasury for sanction for the payment of a gratuity of £T. 5 to each of the two cavasses who were with Major Maunsell at the time of the attack.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

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No. 122.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received October* 15.)

(No. 351.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October* 9, 1900.

WITH reference to Sir N. R. O'Conor's despatch No. 177 of the 22nd May last, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, reporting that further depredations have been made by the Hamidieh in that province.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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Inclosure in No. 122.

*Vice-Consul Jones to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 37.)
Sir, *Kharput, September* 26, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to report that, according to information received from Diarbekir, two Mussulman villages, Shakir Viran and Suvedi, situated at a distance of seven hours to the east from that city, were recently attacked by Hamidiehs, who, after wounding two of the villagers, carried off 150 sheep.

Subsequently Hamidiehs of the troops under the command of Ibrahim Pasha attacked the village of Kara Baghché belonging to the Kurdish tribe of Kara Ghechi, whereupon the Chief of the tribe, a certan Khalil Bey, went with his followers to meet the assailants, and a serious affray ensued, in which, it is said, 100 lives were lost, and many men were wounded.

On receiving word of this occurrence, the Kaïmakam of Severek, to whose jurisdiction the village in question nominally belongs, telegraphed to the Vali of Diarbekir for help, and on the following day his Excellency ordered a certain Captain Hamdi to proceed to the scene of the combat at the head of a body of troops numbering not more than fifteen, but the Captain refused to carry out these orders, alleging with reason that if his Mission were to be of any avail he would require at least a battalion under his command, whereupon the Vali contented himself with telegraphing advice to the Kaïmakam to act as peacemaker between Ibrahim Pasha and the Chief Khalil Bey, and the Government appears to have taken no further steps in the matter.

Again, on the 15th instant, Bismil, a village situated at about ten hours distance to the east of the city, was attacked by Hamidiehs, who carried off fourteen camels.

News of more serious import has been received to the effect that hostilities, resulting on this occasion in the loss of eighty lives, have broken out again between the troops under the orders of Mustafa Pasha, Commander of the Hamidiehs in the Djezireh district and the Kurds of the Sor tribe, whose emnity to Mustafa Pasha was reported in my despatch No. 16 of the 8th May last.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. FRANCIS JONES.

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No. 123.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received October* 15.)

(No. 146. Commercial. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Therapia, October* 9, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 140 of the 25th ultimo, I have the honour to state that a gentleman interested in the Mersina–Adana Railway Company inquired of me a few days ago whether Her Majesty's Government would not support the Company, as the French Government had done, by means of a direct representation to the German Government at Berlin.

I have since taken an opportunity to ask my French colleague what action M. Delcassé had taken in the matter. M. Bapst informed me that the French view, like ours, was that the rival Companies must be urged to come to terms; that with this object the French Embassy had, from time to time, requested the German Ambassador to use his good offices; and that as the Anglo-French Company had lately declared that they were making no progress towards an agreement, M. Delcassé had directed the French Ambassador at Berlin to bring the matter to the attention of the German Foreign Office, intimating, at the same time, that if the rights of the Mersina–Adana Railway Company were infringed, steps would be taken to prevent the employment of French capital to assist Germany in constructing the proposed Bagdad Railway.

M. Bapst added that the German reply had been satisfactory, and that the French Government had good reason to think that the Mersina–Adana Company would now find it easier to come to some kind of an understanding with the Anatolian Railway Company.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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No. 124.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received October* 15.)

(No. 352 A.)
My Lord, *Therapia, October* 10, 1900.

YOUR Lordship is aware that the Sultan is much engrossed at present with his plan for constructing, with funds to be subscribed by Mussulmans throughout the world, a railway from Damascus to Mecca. Subscriptions have, in point of fact, been received from various parts of the Turkish Empire, and the newspapers publish frequent paragraphs on the ready response which has been given to his Imperial Majesty's appeal, and on the progress which the scheme is represented as making.

Notwithstanding these flattering announcements, it may safely be said that no competent railway authority believes that a sufficient fund can be raised by so-called voluntary contributions to build a railway of 1,600 kilom. in length, or that the contemplated line across the desert could possibly pay its expenses, or serve any useful purpose, when laid. The Sultan, however, holds fast to his project, which he imagines will strengthen his hold on the affections of Moslems. There is reason to think that the Moslems of Russia and India are being approached on the subject, and hearing that steps have been already taken to warn the former against supporting an unworkable scheme, I have thought that Her Majesty's Government might, perhaps, desire to give a similar warning in India.

It is, of course, all too probable that the railway fund, on which I learn that drafts are already being made in the form of loans for Palace purposes, will ultimately go the way of the war fund, the fund for the wounded, and many others of a similar kind, which have been systematically diverted to purposes other than those for which they were originally intended.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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## No. 125.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received October* 22.)

(No. 352 B. Confidential.)

*Therapia, October* 12, 1900.

My Lord,

THE contrast between the accounts of the Spaghank incident which find credence respectively at Van and Erzeroum is further emphasized by the despatch transmitted herewith in copy, in which Her Majesty's Consul at the latter place gives reasons for calling in question the value of the tranquillizing report of the Russian Consul at Van. The affair indeed still remains, as Mr. Lamb observes, a mystery, and it is doubtful whether Enver Pasha's report will enable a final opinion to be formed.

I have, &c.

(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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Inclosure in No. 125.

*Consul Lamb to Mr. de Bunsen.*

(No. 14. Confidential.)

*Erzeroum, September* 28, 1900.

Sir,

IN returning the draft despatch No. 231 of the 8th September of his Excellency Sir N. O'Conor to the Secretary of State, which you were good enough to forward for my information, I feel bound to remark that the report of the Russian Vice-Consul, therein alluded to, seems to me entirely inconclusive, and it is therefore a matter for regret that the suggested simultaneous visit of Major Maunsell to Sasun could not be entertained.

Whether a massacre in the strict sense of the word did or did not take place at Spaghank is still a matter of uncertainty here, and will probably now remain a mystery, but it is at least very generally believed; and M. Tumanski's negative report, in view of the fact that he did not actually visit the scene of the alleged horrors, and that his estimate of the number killed is considered below that given officially by the Bitlis authorities themselves, commands no more credence than will that of the Ottoman Commissioner himself, in spite of the latter's admittedly high personal character.

Enver Pasha indeed confessed that it would be impossible for him alone to ascertain and report the truth, if that were of a nature discreditable to the local authorities.

I note that an injury to his foot is put forward as the reason of M. Tumanski's failure to reach Spaghank; but according to accounts received both here and in Bitlis, he was simply misled and deceived by the Vali of Bitlis, who, as I reported in my No. 12 of the 1st instant, left the city immediately after him, and overtook him on the road. As far as the local effect of his action therefore is concerned, it would have been better if M. Tumanski had never quitted Van.

It may be interesting in this connection to note that the Rev. R. M. Cole, the American missionary in Bitlis, set out from that place about three weeks ago in order to perform certain clerical duties in the town and district of Mush. Though duly provided by the Vali of Bitlis with the customary zaptieh escort, he was not allowed to enter Mush, but was met and sent back by the police, and the efforts of the American Consulate here have hitherto failed to obtain permission for him to return to Mush.

Mr. Cole has been for considerably over twenty years in Bitlis, and is consequently perfectly well known throughout the vilayet; and the sudden objection to his presence in Mush at this moment, when the refugees from Sasun are supposed to be collected there, suggests an obvious conclusion.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HARRY H. LAMB.

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## No. 126.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received October* 22.)

(No. 353.)

*Therapia, October* 12, 1900.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to inclose copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum giving an account of an attack by Kurds on the Russian Acting Consul-General in that place and on his Military Attaché, which took place on the 27th ultimo near Erzinghian.

This fresh instance of the turbulence and growing combativeness of the Kurds has created considerable uneasiness. The Russian Embassy has, I hear, sent in a strong note demanding the restitution of the stolen baggage and the punishment of the aggressors. No mention is as yet made of an indemnity, but vigorous complaints are put forward of the inability of the Sublime Porte to control the Kurds.

There are signs that the Ottoman Government are beginning to perceive that they have let the Kurds go too far. It is, however, likely to prove a much more difficult task to pursue the freebooters in this case into their fastnesses in the Dersim than it was to punish the party which attacked Major Maunsell, and which was more or less isolated in the summer quarters of the tribe.

I also inclose extracts from a despatch which has reached me from Major Maunsell, pointing out the extent to which the coherence and aggressive power of the Kurds have been augmented by the formation of the Hamidieh regiments.

I have, &c.

(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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Inclosure 1 in No. 126.

*Consul Lamb to Mr. de Bunsen.*

(No. 15.)

*Erzeroum, September* 28, 1900.

Sir,

THE Russian Acting Consul-General in this place and the Military Attaché to the Consulate have been the victims of an attack by Kurds, apparently very similar in character to that made upon Major Maunsell in the Hekkiari six weeks ago.

Prince Chakhovskoy and Colonel Prjevalsky left Erzeroum on the 19th instant for Erzinghian by a southern route, passing through Kozlitchan and Palumer, on the borders of the Dersim. They seem to have proceeded safely until yesterday, when, within four hours' journey of Erzinghian, they were attacked by a body of Kurds, which must have been sufficiently numerous, since the Russian party numbered eight or ten persons, all well armed, and yet were unable to offer any effective resistance. Their horses and baggage were carried off, but they were personally uninjured and were able to make the rest of their way into Erzinghian on foot.

Details of the affair are not yet to hand, but it appears that a patrol of twenty-five or thirty soldiers, which left Palumer either with or immediately after the Russians, came into contact with the aggressors and inflicted on them a loss of eight men, having themselves also two killed and some wounded.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HARRY H. LAMB.

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Inclosure 2 in No. 126.

*Major Maunsell to Mr. de Bunsen.*

(No. 40.)

(Extracts.) [*Undated.*]

THE recent expedition into this country to avenge the attack on my caravan has been completely successful and has had an excellent effect, the Zshiriki having suffered the loss of all their sheep, mules, and various goods, several leaders killed and eight in prison here. The other tribes are paying in their arrears of taxes, and the district may be expected to remain peaceable for a certain time now, and their power of doing mischief will be broken.

There is no doubt that the Hamidieh movement—the appointing of tribal leaders as

Colonels of regiments—has had, and is having, a great effect in consolidating various broken fractions of Kurdish tribes, and mitigating, in a great measure, the want of unity and tribal authority which supervened when the great "derebeys" were exterminated by the Turkish Government fifty or sixty years ago.

And thus the possibility of the Kurds being able to unite against the Turkish Government, should a favourable opportunity arise or a powerful leader be forthcoming, appears to be made less remote.

From certain indications this year, it appears that the Mushir, Zekki Pasha, and the military authorities here have at last begun to realize the danger to the State of the system they have created, and have taken certain steps to try and prevent the situation becoming more acute.

It is extraordinary among the Kurds south of the lake with what superstitious reverence Beder Khan Beg is spoken of, a Kurdish Chief of great influence some forty years ago near Tezire. Some of his family are still alive, but are carefully kept in exile away from Kurdistan. There is no doubt that if one of these found it possible to return he would raise a considerable following, the moment being favourable. The Turks have taken great trouble to get rid of the remnants of the old ruling families in Kurdistan, but now the various Hamidieh cavalry leaders, themselves created and given rank by the Sultan, bid fair to occupy the places of the lost "derebeys," and this, too, with good arms and a certain organization supplied them by the Government.

The Kurds are quick to recognize the advantages of belonging to Hamidieh regiments, such as the possession of good arms, practical immunity from all civil law, and rank given for their Chiefs; but for the other side of the contract they really care nothing, and use the advantages gained for furthering their own ends and advancing the Kurdish national spirit. When the Turks find themselves in difficulties elsewhere the Kurds will bring this home to them.

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## No. 127.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received October* 22.)

(No. 358.)

*Constantinople, October* 15, 1900.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a Report which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, giving an interesting account of the state of the vilayet during the summer months.

Your Lordship will note that Mr. Lamb's remarks regarding the Hamidieh entirely agree with the observations of Major Maunsell, to which I called attention in my despatch No. 353 of the 12th instant.

I have, &c.

(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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Inclosure in No. 127.

*Report on the Condition of the Vilayet of Erzeroum during the Quarter ended 30th September*, 1900.

IN the record of the past quarter there are two, and only two, salient features to remark, of which one is as eminently satisfactory as the other is unfortunately the reverse. The former is the partial relief of the economic tension which had prevailed during the previous twelve months, and the latter is the deplorable condition of insecurity and disorder into which the greater part of the province has once again relapsed. Contrary to all the previsions of the earlier portions of the year, the harvest throughout the entire vilayet has proved an abundant one. Unusually violent storms of rain and hail at the commencement of harvest-time caused serious damage in certain localities, and in some more remote mountain districts the remissness of the Multezims has resulted as usual in much loss to the peasantry; but, taken as a whole, the yield of 1900 appears to have been almost unprecedented in the memory of the present generation, and the fear of wide-spread distress, if not actual famine, which would almost necessarily have resulted from another year of scarcity, has therefore been removed. The price of barley, which at the end of June had risen to 21 or 22 piastres, fell in August to 9 piastres, and in September has touched even 7 piastres per kilch.



Wheat has fallen almost in the same proportion, and bread from 60 paras to 30 or 25 paras the oke. The effect on trade, however, seems at present to have been insignificant, though it will probably make itself felt in the shape of a revival in the spring.

Though the political tranquillity of the province remained undisturbed, there occurred towards the end of June a sudden and abnormal recrudescence of highway robbery and pillage throughout the southern, eastern, and western sections of the vilayet, and since then scarcely a day has passed without reports being received of raids on villages, cattle-lifting, plundering of caravans, or other similar excesses on the part of the Kurds, which in several instances have been accompanied with loss of life. Even the Trebizond highway is considered to have become so insecure that caravans hesitate to traverse it at certain points without a special escort, and the villagers carting produce to the city, who have hitherto been accustomed to travel chiefly by night so as to reach the gates towards dawn, have almost universally abandoned their former practice, endeavouring to accomplish the entire trip by day. This state of affairs is generally attributed to the practical emancipation from all control enjoyed by those clans whose Chiefs rank as officers in the Hamidieh cavalry. The civil authority declares itself incompetent to proceed against them, and the military can take no steps without special authority from Constantinople, if indeed it does not view with secret satisfaction the discomfiture of the other. The brother of a Kurdish Chief, who has attained to some notoriety in this neighbourhood by the boldness and frequency of his depredations, assured one of my informants that they had been given to understand that they were free to do their worst "so long as they gave rise to no question of a political order."

The four cazas in the north-eastern corner of the vilayet, Nariman, Kiskim, Ispir, and Tortoum (and in a less degree also Baibourt), have alone enjoyed comparative immunity from disorder. They are mostly beyond the reach of Kurdish raids, while the energy of Kadri Bey, in the neighbouring Vilayet of Trebizond, has succeeded in reducing to order the Lazes, who formerly troubled the security of the border. In Nariman the energy of an unusually active Kaïmakam, and in Kiskim the well-directed influence of one or two local Beys, have contributed to this end.

Throughout the remainder of the vilayet the state of insecurity above described may be considered universal, the degree of its intensity being in direct proportion to the proximity of Kurdish centres. One of the most disordered districts has been the Plain of Khinous, the playground of some half-a-dozen Hamidieh clans. During the entire summer Shkodrali Mahmoud Pasha, Chef d'État-Major of the Hamidieh cavalry, has been resident in Khinous, ostensibly for the purpose of composing tribal feuds and in general controlling the Kurds, but his influence would appear to have had rather a contrary effect, as he seems to have regarded his mission purely and exclusively from his specialist standpoint, quite indifferent to the interests of the non-Hamidieh population.

In addition to the Kurdish trouble, a certain laxity of discipline in the garrison, which is generally attributed to personal animosities between the General of Division, Mehemed Ali Pasha and the officers commanding under him, has rendered the immediate approaches to the city and the surrounding fortifications still further insecure. One or two instances of molestation of women entering or leaving the town have more especially exasperated the Mussulmans of Erzeroum. It is supposed to be the consciousness of his inability to remedy these evils, which have caused a wide-spread feeling of discontent amongst the Turkish population, that has induced the Vali, Sherif Mohammed Raouf Pasha, repeatedly to demand a transfer, and finally to tender his resignation.

It is true that within the last three weeks of the quarter a certain change has been noticeable. Mahmoud Pasha has been ordered to take the field with 500 men. The Mushir, Zekki Pasha, has, I believe, himself proceeded to Khinous, and decisive measures have been taken, small detachments of regular troops having been dispersed throughout Khinous and Passin, large seizures of cattle been effected, and upwards of thirty Kurds handed over to the judicial authorities. It is not improbable that the Vali's resignation has been the lever that has set this machinery in motion. The attack on the Russian Acting Consul and Colonel Prjevalski, which formed the subject of my despatch No. 15 of the 28th September, came in good time to add force to his Excellency's representations.

Much inconvenience, loss, and even suffering continue to be caused by the maintenance of the regulations affecting communications with Russia, the severity of which seems to be increasing rather than relaxed. The frontier can now be crossed at practically only two points, Kiotek and Bayezid. Ingress and egress are alike refused

to Armenians of all three religious communities, and Russia seems now inclined to retaliate by withholding permission to enter her territory from all Turkish subjects whatsoever.

A signal instance of the inconvenience, to say the least of it, occasioned by these disabilities is afforded by the Nahié of Khodatchor, in the Kiskim Caza. This Nahié, together with the adjacent villages of Moukhourghour and Garmikh, comprises nearly 1,000 families of Catholic Armenians, the adult male members of which have been accustomed for many generations past to earn their livelihood in the Caucasus, Crimea, and southern provinces of Russia as bakers, working for two or three years at a stretch, and then returning to their families with the proceeds of their industry. Under the present circumstances, these naturally prosperous communities are rapidly being reduced to ruin. Those members who are at home, unable to return to Russia, find themselves deprived of their only means of earning a further livelihood, while those who are absent are unable to communicate with their families, which, in many cases, are already enduring the sufferings of poverty through the inability of the wage-earners to return to them.

In a recent tour through the Cazas of Kiskim, Ispir, and Baibourt this was the grievance most frequently brought to my notice, not only by the Catholic and Gregorian Armenians, but also by Mussulmans, many of whom it appears, at least in the last-named caza, have adopted the habit of proceeding to the Crimea as labourers or handicraftsmen. Until recently the latter seem generally to have been able to pass through Lazistan and slip across the frontier between Artwin and the coast, but of late the Russian authorities have been increasingly severe, and I was told of many having been sent back.

In conclusion, therefore, I should say that though the abundant harvests of this summer have done much to alleviate the condition of the population, and the immediate outlook is less gloomy than it was at the corresponding period of last year, yet the general process of impoverishment continues its course unchecked, and with it the spread of discontent.

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## No. 128.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received October* 22.)

(No. 359.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October* 15, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 351 of the 9th instant, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, reporting that as a result of the struggle between the troops under Mustapha Pasha and the Sor Kurds, ten villages have been destroyed in the Djezireh district. Four of these villages were inhabited by Christians.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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Inclosure in No. 128.

*Vice-Consul Jones to Mr. de Bunsen.*

(No. 38.)
Sir, *Kharput, October* 3, 1900.

WITH reference to the outbreak of hostilities between the Kurds of the Sor tribe and the troops under the command of Mustapha Pasha in the Djezireh district of the Province of Diarbekir, mentioned in the last paragraph of my despatch No. 37 of the 26th ultimo, I have the honour to report that in the course of the struggle ten villages have been plundered and destroyed, four of which were inhabited by Christians, the others being Kurdish villages.

I regret to have to report that in this province also the depredations of the Kurdish tribes in districts comparatively near to the seat of Government have recently been causing unrest among the settled population; but as the Kurds in question have



not been enrolled among the Hamidieh troops, the Government of this province has less compunction in using the forces at its disposal to punish the unruly tribesmen, and it is hoped that order will soon be restored.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. FRANCIS JONES.

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## No. 129.

*Foreign Office to India Office.*

(Confidential.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, October* 22, 1900.

I AM directed by the Marquess of Salisbury to transmit to you, for such steps as Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India may consider desirable, a copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Constantinople relative to the project for the construction of a railway from Damascus to Mecca,* for which subscriptions will, it is believed, be invited in India.

I am, &c.
(Signed) T. H. SANDERSON.

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## No. 130.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received October* 29.)

(No. 363.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October* 22, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 353 of the 12th instant, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, giving a more detailed account of the attack by Kurds on the Russian Acting Consul-General's party near Erzingian.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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Inclosure in No. 130.

*Consul Lamb to Mr. de Bunsen.*

(No. 17.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, October* 7, 1900.

THE Russian Acting Consul-General returned here yesterday from Erzingian. From Prince Chakhovskoy's account it appears that the attack upon himself and Colonel Prjevalski, reported in my despatch No. 15 of the 28th ultimo, was not (as on receipt of the first telegraphic news was generally imagined) a preconcerted affair, but was the outcome of an accidental *rencontre*.

Their party left Palumer, escorted by the Kaïmakam of Kozlitchan and twenty men of a Rifle battalion under a Yuzbashi, and being so strong no danger whatever was anticipated. However, on approaching a small Kurdish hamlet situated in a defile about seven hours short of Erzingian, the heights above the road were found to be occupied by a band of from 100 to 150 Kurds, who, as it afterwards transpired, were on their way, together with two other bands of about the same force, to raid a village in the plain of Erzingian. The soldiers of the escort, not at once suspecting the strength of the band, advanced in two sections to dislodge them, but, finding themselves hopelessly outnumbered, fell back on the hamlet, losing one man wounded and five missing.

After a short interval the Kurds advanced again to the assault, and the whole party was forced to take refuge in a hut, three more of the soldiers being killed. The lives of the whole party were now in the hands of the Kurds, but after firing a few more shots through the roof of the hut, one of which severely wounded a sergeant of the escort, they retired again into the hills, driving off the saddle-horses and baggage animals of the entire party, which had of necessity been left outside.

The Kurds are supposed to have had four men wounded, of whom one subsequently died, and not eight killed, as was at first reported here.

* No. 124.

Towards evening the party emerged from their shelter and made their way by a circuitous route on foot to Erzingian.

The Kurds engaged in the affair are supposed to have belonged mainly to the Lolanli and Ketcheli clans, inhabiting the Nahie of Danzig.

As a result of negotiations entered into by the authorities of Erzingian, all the horses and the bulk of the stolen baggage have already been restored, and two battalions of Nizam have been sent to the district in question, but there still seems to be some uncertainty as to whether efficient measures will be taken to inflict punishment on the tribes, who are believed to have influential protectors at the head-quarters of the corps d'armée.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HARRY H. LAMB.

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No. 131.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received October* 29.)

(No. 364.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October* 23, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 359 of the 15th instant, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Kharput, reporting further on the depredations of the Hamidieh in the neighbourhood of Diarbekir.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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Inclosure in No. 131.

*Vice-Consul Jones to Mr. de Bunsen.*

(No. 40.)
Sir, *Kharput, October* 10, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to report that on the 29th ultimo Yiwadjik, a Kurdish village situated at a distance of three hours to the south of Diarbekir, was attacked by a band of Hamidiehs numbering sixty horsemen, who, after killing one of the villagers and wounding some others, carried off all the animals.

About twenty hours after the occurrence the local authorities at Diarbekir were prevailed upon to send to the village some mounted zaptiehs, who shortly afterwards returned to the city without having effected any arrests.

I regret to have to add that the district of Pallu, belonging to the Province of Diarbekir, but within a day's journey from this city, is being harried by these predatory bands, who there attack Christian and Moslem villages alike, whereas, in the Diarbekir district, the Christian villages have hitherto enjoyed a notorious immunity from the depredations of the Hamidiehs.

The presence of these troops in the neighbourhood of Pallu is naturally viewed with consternation by the inhabitants of this Province (Kharput).

According to information received from the Mardin district (Mutessariflik) at Nisibin, the Hamidieh forces are partly under the command of Abdurrahman Pasha, and partly under that of his son Ali, who has allied himself with Mustafa Pasha, of Jezireh, a state of internecine conflict between different bands of the Hamidiehs being the result which, if not an unmixed evil in itself, yet renders the roads in that region thoroughly unsafe.

Again, on the road between Nisibin and Mardin, the two small tribes of Mirsina and Kotchikan are at war, but the local authorities display the greatest indifference in the matter, and at Nisibin itself the Sheykh-et-Tai (Chief of the Tai tribe), having practically constituted himself a ruler, is exacting toll from the merchants and raising constructions in the city with the evident design of holding Nisibin as Mustafa Pasha holds Jezireh.

In the Midyat district for some time past a feud has existed between the Haverki and Dakshuri tribes, and this state of things, which may be said to have become normal, still continues, involving loss of life and damage to property on either side.

At Jezireh, which is practically in the hands of Mustafa Pasha, Commander of the Hamidiehs there, Abdul Ghafur, an exile from the capital, is acting temporarily as Kaïmakam.



In the Caza of Awera, great insecurity prevails owing to the raids perpetrated by Kurds of the tribe of Temno Gori, who have recently moved to Shkara, a place near the river, whence they harass the region of Desht and Bishare. This tribe has fourteen of the repeating rifles, which some months ago were discovered to have been stolen from the Government depôt at Diarbekir.

The Mutessarif of Mardin, though not devoid of merit, appears to be doing but little to check the downward course of affairs in his district, but he is probably powerless to bring about a change for the better, as the evils resulting from the establishment of the Hamidieh forces have now, it would seem, passed beyond the control of the local authorities of the Vilayet of Diarbekir, even if those authorities had any desire to bring about such a change, a desire which, in the case of the Governor-General of that province, may be safely said to be non-existent.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. FRANCIS JONES.

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No. 132.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received November* 5.)

(No. 370.)
My Lord, *Therapia, October* 29, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Adana giving an interesting account of a journey made by him from Konia across the Taurus Mountains, viâ Eregli, Bulgar Maden, and Namroun, to his post.

Colonel Massy makes some observations on the possibility of archæological exploration in the regions traversed, which may, perhaps, have some interest for the authorities of the British Museum.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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Inclosure in No. 132.

*Colonel Massy to Mr. de Bunsen.*

(No. 24.)
Sir, *Adana, October* 10, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to inform you that, in returning to this post from leave of absence, I travelled from Constantinople to Konieh by train and thence, on horseback, across the Taurus Mountains viâ Eregli, Bulgar Maden, and Namroun.

In the hope that some of my observations during this journey may prove of interest, I take the liberty to forward to your Excellency the following short report.

I am anxious to begin by acknowledging the kindness and consideration shown to me everywhere by officials as well as by simple inhabitants, which rendered my journey not only agreeable but easy.

The Wali of Konieh, Ferid Pasha, appears to be an enlightened man, hard-working and honest. I understand that he is quite above corruption. He has much self-confidence, which amounts, perhaps, to obstinacy. He makes his presence felt, and as he is honest in purpose he may be said to be a very good Governor.

The chief want of that vilayet appears to be irrigation works. The Wali hopes to introduce these if the Supreme Government will only give him the necessary funds.

Another interesting personage at Konieh is the Head of the Medlevi (or dancing) Dervishes, Chélébi Effendi. I visited him and had a very interesting conversation with him. You are aware that he has considerable religious power and influence, and that the present Wali, soon after his arrival, found a pretext to quarrel with him and to reduce him to a secondary or subordinate place in Konieh, where heretofore he had been all powerful. It was interesting to note, therefore, that Chélébi Effendi led the conversation with me to England, asking questions regarding expenses, wages, &c., and remarking on the great freedom enjoyed by all the inhabitants. He then said that this was not the case in his country, and that he was practically a prisoner, unable to move beyond the precincts of his tekké at Konieh or his summer residence at Meram, half-an-hour from

the town, where I visited him. He then asked me how I thought a person of some distinction in his own country, who was forced to take refuge in England, would be treated, and whether kindness would be shown him. It struck me at once that he referred to himself. I gave a guarded answer, saying that England was a free country, where all who abided by the laws were well treated and respected. It would be strange if he contemplated an escape. I understand that he and the Russian Consul are much together, both having a common interest in their love of strong drink.

I should have mentioned that the Wali was personally most kind to me, placing his carriage at my disposal and expressing the greatest admiration for England. He is decidedly Anglophile. His daughters have always had an English governess, and speak English fluently.

At Eregli I was entertained by the Kaïmakam, who was extremely civil. Here I met Edhem Bey, Assistant Director of the Archæological Museum at Constantinople, who was engaged in inspecting any known antiquities and in removing to Konieh, and thence by train to Constantinople, a very fine sarcophagus found at a village called Ambararassi, near Eregli. It is interesting to note that endeavours are at last being made by the Government to search for and to collect such objects as can be removed and to repair larger buildings which are falling into decay. The desire is worthy of encouragement, without jealousy, by all European Archæological Societies, as it is better that objects capable of removal should be transported to the Museum at Constantinople and larger antiquities be kept in repair than that they should all be allowed to crumble gradually to pieces. It might be possible to come to an agreement whereby our British Museum would assist the Constantinople Museum in this work in return for a share of all objects found. If we do not make some such effort, it is possible that Germany will forestall us in this work. The Vilayets of Adana and Konia alone contain more valuable archæological remains than could be opened up and removed or repaired in ten years. Many German scientists are attracted by them, and a dozen or more have travelled down this year viâ Konieh to examine them. I was able, with the aid of local information and assistance, to discover and to visit several new Hittite and ancient Greek inscriptions in the valley below Bulgar Maden and in the neighbouring valley to the west. These I had not time to copy, but I hope to do so later. They would appear to deal, from their situation and commanding positions, with the silver and lead mines of this district. I cannot help thinking that a proposal from our British Museum to work in archæological matters hand in hand with the Museum at Constantinople, would meet with success if made in a fair and ungrasping spirit. It is regrettable that some effort be not made in the direction of opening up at length the archæological wealth of these parts.

I was much interested in my visit to Bulgar Maden where the silver and lead mines are being worked by the local Governor, who is also Manager of the mining operations. When it is said that Government allows only a floating capital of £T. 7,000, or about 6,300*l.*, per annum for this work, and that the Kaïmakam, nevertheless, can show a profit of 50 per cent. per annum on the capital, it must be acknowledged that this official is doing his best under difficulties. He has himself improvised all machinery, buildings, furnaces, and plant, the power employed being hydraulic. With increased capital he could make a large and lucrative concern out of these mines, as there is apparently no limit to the ore.

As it is, the means available for working are very rudimentary; men burrow into the mountain side in different places, wherever they like practically, and bring out the ore, which is carried down to the furnaces on pack animals and cast, together with charcoal, into the furnaces which are fanned to the necessary heat by large bellows worked by hydraulic power. The lead, which contains a considerable proportion of silver, flows out by apertures at the bottom of the furnaces, and is then ladled into receptacles and, when cold, is taken in blocks to other furnaces where the silver is separated from the lead. This is then sent to Constantinople where, by another process, the gold is extracted from the silver. It is said to contain a good proportion of gold, 1 per 1,000, I think, I was told. Some 1,300 oks, or something over 1½ tons of silver, are sent now annually to Constantinople, besides large quantities of lead.

The appliances in working those mines are rudimentary, yet they are ingenious and even remarkably interesting when the situation is remembered, in a narrow valley, 5,000 feet high, with no fuel within two days' journey. All the wood in the neighbourhood has now been consumed. The Governor is a remarkable and interesting man, having been employed as Secretary to Moukhtar Pasha during the operations round Kars, afterwards proceeding to Egypt, where he remained many years, for some time as secretary to Ibrahim Pasha. He is an honest man, accepting no bribes. His fault as a



Governor is that he is somewhat hard on the Christian population, making them work hard at the mines on somewhat low wages. The reason for this may be that he found things very slack on arrival, and was obliged to instil ideas of industry into the local Greek population. He is in many ways an intelligent, clever fellow, but imbued with Oriental ideas withal. In speaking of our English soldiers seen in Egypt he was loud in his praise as to their bravery, behaviour, discipline, &c., but he added that they had one great fault, they are too clean. A soldier should be rough and, above all, dirty. He is, perhaps, satisfied then with the local product of this country.

It is worthy of notice that a great many Germans have lately travelled down the Konia railway line and across towards Adana or Kaiserieh and Sivas. They would appear to be, for the most part, scientists interested in archæology and geology; but the modern German scientist is a practical man, who has en eye as well to the main point—financial profit—and I cannot help thinking that most of them are subsidized by Societies or by their Government in order to assist in opening up trade with this country.

The German is everywhere welcome now in this country, receiving everywhere all possible assistance to facilitate his mission. In fact, he is received as an ally. He is not slow to take advantage of this, with the result that Germans are now doing very useful work in Asia Minor. Trade would appear to be almost entirely in their hands, as far as concerns exports from or imports to the interior. On a little-frequented road in the Taurus Mountains I picked up a paper, which proved to be a German advertisement for a firm in Leipzig. The Germans have been quick to understand that there are many countries, one of which is Turkey, where cheap wares sell best.

I was careful everywhere to inquire as to agricultural operations and as to any possible openings for implements connected therewith, or other opportunities, for our trade. The crops in Anatolia have been splendid. Large exports are being made. Those in the Cilician Plain of the Adana Vilayet have been disappointing. After promising well in the spring, some very heavy rain, followed by a blight, rendered the yield much below the average in wheat, barley, and sesame. The cotton is a fair crop, but the entire yield has not yet been exactly ascertained.

The agricultural implements which find a sale in Asia Minor must fulfil two conditions. They must be light and they must be cheap. For this reason, the American reapers are being imported, and used much more generally every year. I noted at Konieh, and again at the village where I stopped, a day's journey to the east of that town, the advertisements, well got up with pictorial attractions, of the Johnston, Harveston, Batavia, New York, United States of America, and of light moving and other agricultural machines of Walter Wood, Hoosick Falls, New York, United States of America. An interesting point connected with these advertisements is that the agent for their sale is given as the British Eastern Agency, Smyrna. Does this mean that this British Agency cannot find suitable machines in all England, and must seek them in the United States?

In the Adana Vilayet, also, I have ascertained that the machines which sell are of American make.

As I propose submitting a special Report to the Foreign Office, in which I shall endeavour to give details on this subject, which I trust may be of use to our English merchants, I refrain from more than alluding to this important subject in this despatch.

It is satisfactory to be able to record a very strong desire which is everywhere noticeable to improve the roads in the districts where I passed. From Konieh it is quite possible, and, in fact, easy, to drive to Adana or Kaiserieh or Sivas, and a good metalled road will soon be finished from Konieh to Adana, it being already completed in the latter vilayet. Another road is being made for wheeled traffic from Konieh to the port of Adalia, which should thereby gain importance. It would appear that strict orders have been given for these improvement, and it is to be hoped that they may be further developed to the advantage of the districts through which these communications pass.

I have not alluded to the railway from Haider Pasha to Konieh, on which I took notes, which are available if required, as I presume that all details of the line are in your hands already.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. H. H. MASSY,
*Her Majesty's Vice-Consul.*

No. 133.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received November 5.*)

(No. 371.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October* 30, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Adana, reporting on the miserable condition of the Mussulman refugees from Crete in that vilayet.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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Inclosure in No. 133.

*Lieutenant-Colonel Massy to Mr. de Bunsen.*

(No. 25.)
Sir, *Adana, October* 14, 1900.

I HAVE to inform your Excellency that, on my return from leave of absence to this post, I find a very important question in process of development.

Your Excellency will recall my having reported in my Quarterly Comparative Report on this vilayet, dated the 13th January last, the arrival of several thousand Cretan refugees and their dispersal in groups throughout the Adana plain. I mentioned, also, that many of them would doubtless die every summer from disease in this unhealthy plain, and that they must all keenly regret their folly in having emigrated.

It is exactly as I foresaw. The Government went to some expense and trouble to build them houses, and they gave them a small daily sum on which to live, but the measures taken were not sufficient. The daily pittance, in itself insufficient, was irregulary given, and some of it remained, naturally, in the hands of the Government officials. No provision of any useful kind was made to start these people in trades. They are not an agricultural population, and there are not sufficient local openings in trade to employ this extra influx of population.

As a result, the majority of these poor wretches is now starving, prostrate with malaria and entirely discontented.

Recourse to the Government having produced no result, they lost no time in appealing to me on my arrival, begging me to endeavour to succeed in obtaining permission to leave the country. One poor fellow filled me with pity. He could hardly stand, was shaking like a leaf, and assured me that he, his wife, and four children had hardly tasted food for four days. I took him to the Wali, who telegraphed to Constantinople, asking leave for his departure. A refusal was the reply. I again caused my Dragoman to see the Governor-General, remonstrating and pointing out the futility of keeping these people here, discontented, sick, and starving. He has now replied that his orders from Constantinople are to retain all who have been provided with dwellings or pensions, but that, if I will communicate to him the names of those who desire to leave through illness or other causes, he will do what is necessary.

I am now acting locally, in concert with the Wali, in the interests of humanity, but I fear that all these refugees, in all some 8,000 souls, will eventually desire to leave, and we shall have an important question in the future. My Russian colleague informs me that the Cretan settlers at Tarsus have appealed to him, and that they intend to petition all the Consuls regarding their fate.

The Local Government has so far failed in its duties that the Committee appointed to supervise the refugees and their wants was appointed by personal favour, instead of owing to the merit of the individual selected. Thus, one of the members, Abdul Kadir Bagdadi, is a notorious intriguer, and a man who has the worst reputation of any in the vilayet. The Wali, even, is afraid of him. He is a man who should be removed from the province, not honoured by selection for any charitable supervision.

I shall communicate again with your Excellency shortly as soon as I have had further opportunity to examine this question.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. H. H. MASSY, *Vice-Consul.*

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No. 134.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received November 5.*)

(No. 373.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October* 30, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 359 of the 15th instant, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith, copy of a further despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, reporting on the lawlessness of the Kurds in that vilayet.

Mr. Jones also draws attention to the oppressive measures which the Vali contemplates using with respect to the Christians.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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Inclosure in No. 134.

*Vice-Consul Jones to Mr. de Bunsen.*

(No. 41.)
Sir, *Kharput, October* 17, 1900.

IN continuation of my despatch No. 40 of the 10th instant, relative to the spread of disorder in the Vilayet of Diarbekir, I have the honour to report that an attack was recently made by the Agha of Bahramki, in the Kaïmakamlik of Bisheri, with his followers, upon the Agha of Slivan (both of these places being within that vilayet) with the result that three lives were lost in the affray, the assailants carrying off all the cattle belonging to the Agha of Slivan.

The rival Aghas are both Kurds, but do not appear to have been enrolled among the Hamidieh forces.

I have the honour to add that I am informed that great anxiety prevails among the Christian portion of the population of Diarbekir in consequence of a rumour to the effect that a general massacre of the Christians was to have been carried out on the occasion of the celebration of the anniversary of His Majesty the Sultan's accession to the throne, observed on the 1st ultimo, and that the intended massacre was only just averted by the timely arrival of telegraphic orders from Constantinople on that day, instructing his Excellency the Vali to defer the intended slaughter; but it is said that the Moslems, both Turks and Kurds, are only waiting for the word to be given to begin the work of destruction.

It is added that the Vali has recently given instructions for the preparation of the lists of the names of those rayahs from whom taxes might have been claimed during the past five years, and though the representatives of the different Christian communities pointed out the difficulties involved in the execution of such an order, owing to the many changes that have occurred during the period through the massacre of many of their number, and the departure of others to foreign countries, his Excellency, it is said, has obtained a Decree from the local Council ("Medjlis"), ordering that these lists be prepared and given up within three days, the Christian communities to be held responsible for all the results of non-compliance with this Decree.

The fact that his Excellency the Vali, who had recently informed the representative of one of the Christian communities that failure to draw up the list required would imply that the community were rebels, did not, according to the usual custom, communicate the Decree to the leaders of the various Christian communities, is looked upon as showing his determination to represent the rayahs of that province as being in rebellion against the Government.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. FRANCIS JONES.

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## No. 135.

*Mersina, Tarsus, and Adana Railway Company to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received November* 6.)

My Lord, 67, *Rue Voivoda, Constantinople, October* 31, 1900.

THE Undersigned, acting on behalf of the English bondholders and shareholders of the Mersina, Tarsus, and Adana Railway Company, have to request your assistance under the following circumstances:—

The railway in question belongs to an Ottoman Company, but its bond and shareholders are almost exclusively English and French, the English bond and shareholders being the most numerous and holding the largest amounts in value. The Company has no kilometric guarantee for its railway, and has been worked under great disadvantages, never, indeed, being able to pay a single farthing to its shareholders, and it is with difficulty that it has been able to keep up its payments upon the bonds, and that by reducing the rate of interest and refunding the overdue coupons.

About a year ago His Majesty the Sultan gave by Iradé a Concession to a German group for the construction of a line of railway from Konieh to Bagdad, in consequence of which surveys were made which resulted in the conclusion that the line must pass by or near to Adana, and probably have an outlet at Yourmourtalik or some other port on the Gulf of Alexandretta. It is more than probable that many years will elapse before the line to Bagdad will be constructed, but we have learnt from good authority that the Sultan has consented that a provisional line be constructed from the Gulf of Alexandretta in the direction of Konieh with the view of facilitating the construction of the Bagdad line. Should such a scheme be carried out it will mean ruin to our railway, inasmuch as the merchandize conveyed upon it, and which is almost its sole source of profit, is collected at Adana and places beyond. Any new line passing through or near Adana would take away its traffic. Our line enjoys no financial guarantee, whereas we are informed that the proposed new line will receive 15,000 fr. per kilom. In the absence of a kilometric guarantee, the Board of Directors always counted upon obtaining extensions into the interior, in order to make the line profitable. These extensions have been refused, although the Company offered to make them without guarantee, and the traffic which they would have conveyed will go now to the German line. We have reason to believe that if the unfairness of allowing the line to approach Adana were pointed out to His Majesty the Sultan, it is probable that before accepting the proposed tracings he would direct that no injustice should be done to our Company.

The French share and bondholders have made representations to the French Government in Paris and to M. Constans, Ambassador here, both of whom have recognized that the injustice which would be done to the French capitalists by allowing a German Company to intercept the traffic of the railway is not one to be lightly regarded, and we have been informed by our French colleagues that the French Government has notified to the German Ambassador in Constantinople, and through the Marquis de Noailles, the French Ambassador at Berlin, that the French interests engaged in the Mersina, Tarsus, and Adana Railway ought to be safeguarded before any steps are taken in the construction of the new line.

We are of opinion that if similar representations were made by your Lordship on behalf of the English capitalists, whose interests amount to upwards of half of the bond and share capital, at Constantinople to the German Ambassador and in Berlin to the German Government, the Syndicate charged with the formation of the new railway would naturally have to come to a friendly arrangement with the Mersina, Tarsus, and Adana Railway, and thus a great injustice, which would mean the absolute wreck of the concern, would be prevented.

We feel convinced that we may appeal to your Lordship for the protection of the large interests which we represent. We believe that a few words from Her Majesty's Representatives here and in Berlin would induce the German Government to see the justice of recommending that the large British interests at stake be safeguarded either by an arrangement with the Company or by the adoption of a new line of route. We may add that we have reason to believe that the German group proposes to float a considerable portion of the capital required in the London market, and that the exposure of the injustice done to the British capital invested would do such injury to the attempt to obtain capital in London that it is in the interest of the German group itself that they should come to an agreement with the Company. The fact that it is proposed, as we understand, to attempt to raise 40 per cent. of the required capital in the French market gives significance



to the action taken by the French Government, and we feel convinced that your Lordship will endeavour to do that which is necessary to put the British capitalists in a not less satisfactory condition.

We have, &c.
(Signed) EDWIN PEARS.
J. WILLIAM WHITTALL.

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## No. 136.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received November* 12.)

(No. 377.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November* 3, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 334 of the 22nd September, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Beirout, reporting on the steps taken by the Valis of Damascus and Beirout to investigate the recent riots at Haifa.

I observe with satisfaction that the Mutessarif has expressed his regrets to Mr. Abela that his house should have been entered by the officer of gendarmerie.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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### Inclosure in No. 136.

*Consul-General Drummond Hay to Mr. de Bunsen.*

(No. 69.)
Sir, *Beirout, October* 18, 1900.

WITH reference to Mr. Heathcote's despatch No. 61 of the 13th September, I have the honour to report that the Valis of Beirout and Damascus, who arrived in Haifa on the 12th and 13th September respectively, left that place on the 14th, and returned to their posts.

As a result of their investigations, the Kaïmakam of Haifa has been removed to the inferior post of Safed, the Kaïmakam of Safed to Tyre, and the Kaïmakam of Tyre to Haifa.

Thirty-nine arrests were made, and the prisoners are shortly to be sent to Beirout for trial.

The Acting British Vice-Consul informs me that only six or seven of them are guilty, and that the removal to Beirout was ordered when it was found that the Cadi of Haifa was likely to acquit the accused for want of evidence.

The whole matter seems to have been much exaggerated by the Germans. The attack was directed against the police, not against the German Colony; but the German Vice-Consul, and, afterwards, the Consulate and the Embassy, took up the matter very seriously, regarding it as an insult to the German flag.

The officer who entered Mr. Abela's house has been removed from the command of the Haifa gendarmerie and sent back to his regiment at Acre, and the Mutessarif has sent an Aide-de-camp to express his regrets to Mr. Abela.

The town and district are now quiet, and there is no reason to fear any further disturbances.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. DRUMMOND HAY.

No. 137.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received November* 12.)

(No. 378.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November* 3, 1900.

WITH reference to Sir N. O'Conor's despatch No. 307 of the 28th August, I have the honour to transmit copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Aleppo, reporting that Enis Pasha, the Vali whose appointment was resisted by the Embassies, has been formally confirmed in his post by Imperial orders.

I find, on inquiry, that no further steps have been taken by the other Embassies to procure the recall of this obnoxious Governor; but Mr. Barnham and his colleagues still decline to recognize him, and the Italian Ambassador informs me that he is instructing his Vice-Consul at Aleppo to hold no reception this year on the approaching birthday of the King of Italy, in order that there may be no question of receiving the Vali.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

P.S.—Since writing the above I learn from a despatch from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Adana, dated the 18th ultimo, that Bahri Pasha, Governor-General of that vilayet, thinks that he may be transferred to Aleppo, while Enis Pasha would replace him at Adana.

M. DE B.

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Inclosure in No. 137.

*Consul Barnham to Sir N. O'Conor.*

(No. 43.)
Sir, *Aleppo, October* 2, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to confirm my telegram No. 13 of this date to the effect that telegraphic instructions were received last night from the Palace that Enis Pasha had been reappointed Vali of Aleppo.

This information has been communicated to me by Ali Mohsin Pasha, who has, at the same time, received the Grand Cordon of the Osmanié in brilliants for his services as Acting Vali.

During the interval which has elapsed since the celebration of the Sultan's accession, a bitter struggle to retain the appointment has been going on between these two men.

On the one hand, we have Enis Pasha furious at the loss of the large sum which he paid to the Palace officials on first appointment, and, on the other, Ali Pasha enjoying a foretaste of the power which he has so long coveted, and, in his eagerness to retain it, telegraphing accusations against Enis Pasha.

When the order came from the Palace that Ali Pasha should take charge of the vilayet, Enis Pasha refused to obey because he had himself received no instructions, and informed Ali Pasha of his intention to proceed next morning to the Konak as usual, but desisted when Ali Pasha intimated that he would bring a company of soldiers and turn him out. From that day Enis Pasha was kept a close prisoner in his own house.

Enis Pasha having now turned the tables upon Ali Pasha, it remains to be seen what attitude the latter will adopt. He will probably wait, expecting that another effort will be made by the Embassies to obtain the dismissal of Enis Pasha; but if he sees that the appointment of Enis Pasha is upheld he will enter into alliance with the Vali, and between the two the people will have a bad time.

The Christians of Aleppo have been jubilant at the discomfiture of Enis Pasha, while the Moslems have been humiliated, and Enis Pasha, of whose fanatical habits strange stories are told, and who is smarting with resentment, will not fail to hurt a Christian whenever he has the chance.

I can give no better instance of his bias against Christians than his treatment of M. Chartier, a Frenchman, who, as Chief Engineer of the vilayet, enjoyed the respect and approval of Raïf Pasha, and carried into execution the many public works which our late Vali projected. A few days after his arrival Enis Pasha called M. Chartier before him, and, characterizing his work as worthless and himself as a vagabond, compelled him



by the insulting nature of his language to resign his appointment. M. Chartier's work cannot, however, have been so bad, for he has since been appointed Chief Engineer of the Vilayet of Sivas with higher pay.

It would, indeed, be strange if a vilayet can be found where better work has been done than that carried out by Raïf Pasha with the help of this indefatigable officer.

To say nothing of the rebuff which we have now received, the situation will be very difficult for the Consuls so long as Enis Pasha remains here, for the current business of a Consulate cannot properly be carried on so long as the Consul cannot communicate personally with the Vali, and we shall be compelled to seek the help of our Ambassador more frequently than would otherwise be the case.

My colleagues have to-day telegraphed and written to their Embassies, and I trust that joint action may be taken to obtain Enis Pasha's early dismissal and removal elsewhere.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HENRY D. BARNHAM.

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No. 138.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received November* 12.)

(No. 381.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November* 4, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 352 of the 10th ultimo, I have the honour to report that according to an official communiqué in the Turkish press, Hadji Arif Ismaïliyi Behram Effendi, of Calcutta, has contributed the sum of 1,000*l.* for the construction of the Damascus–Mecca Railway. The sum was remitted to Constantinople through Eyoub Mehemed Suleiman Effendi, of Bombay.

The same authority states that a small subscription, 6*l.*, has been received for the same purpose from Mias in Russia.

That the unremitting efforts being made to find the necessary money for the undertaking are meeting with some small success is clear from this announcement, and from the daily notices of sums contributed by the various Turkish provinces; but it would seem that the Sultan does not believe he can rely on voluntary, or so-called voluntary, subscriptions, for Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus reports that he learns on good authority that an Iradé has been issued in virtue of which the revenues of the Beirut custom-house are to be set apart for the expenses of the railway.

I have not yet been able to verify this news.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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No. 139.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received November* 12.)

(No. 382. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November* 6, 1900.

WITH reference to your Lordship's despatch No. 260 of the 28th November, 1899, I have the honour to inclose copy of a *note verbale* from the Sublime Porte asking that instructions be given to the British Post Office in Constantinople to settle its accounts with the Turkish Postal Administration for the years 1896 and 1897 by paying the sum of 20,332 fr. 60 c., retained as the amount of compensation claimed by Her Majesty's Government for the families of the two Armenian Post Office employés murdered in 1896.

I would first point out that the sum mentioned in this note is not the amount deducted by Her Majesty's Postmaster-General, which was 10,331 fr. 60 c., *i.e.*, 408*l.* (10,281 fr. 60 c.) compensation, and 50 francs for a registered letter stolen from one of the murdered men; the discrepancy may be due to a clerical error, but before calling the attention of the Sublime Porte to it, and indeed before replying in any way to its note, I desire to request your Lordship's instructions.

The inclosed *note verbale* appears to me to offer a good opportunity for reopening the whole question of our claims arising out of the massacres. I have no hope of obtaining an early settlement of them, but in view of the action already taken by

France to satisfy French claimants, and by the United States, which are still actively pressing their claims, your Lordship may perhaps consider that the Sublime Porte should no longer be left under the impression that we have accepted their note of the 18th July, 1898, in which they sought to disclaim all responsibility for the outrages committed without interference under the very eyes of the Turkish soldiers and police.

That note was transmitted to your Lordship in my despatch No. 411 of the 20th July, 1898, and it is referred to in the *note verbale* which is the subject of this despatch.

With your Lordship's approval I would propose to reply in the terms of the draft of which I venture to inclose a copy.

I take this opportunity to report that the United States' Legation, notwithstanding their previous declaration that they could accept no indirect means of settling their legitimate demands for compensation, have again been considering, as I am confidentially informed by the American Chargé d'Affaires, the advisability of attaining their end by means of an overcharge for a cruiser to be ordered in America by the Sultan. Messrs. Cramp's agent, General Williams, is now here, and I learn that the Minister of Marine has declared that the order will be given to that firm. However this may be, the American Chargé d'Affaires informs me that the Sublime Porte have positively refused to place a higher price on the cruiser than its market value in order to get over the difficulty of the indemnities. Tewfik Pasha tells him that some other way of producing the sum required will easily be found, and though this is only a repetition of previous promises which have so far remained unfulfilled, it is worth noting that, in the case of the American claims amounting, I believe, to 20,000*l.*, this Government appears to admit its liability. The Americans have from the first endeavoured to place their claims on a different footing from those of other nations, on the ground that in the assault that led to the destruction of the American schools near Kharput, Turkish soldiers actually took the lead and pointed the guns which battered down the walls, whereas in the case of the outrages committed in other places they were mere spectators of the work of destruction. It looks as if this distinction were now acknowledged by the Ottoman Government.

Meanwhile, as your Lordship is aware, the French claimants have received one-third of their demands, and arrangements have been made for the periodical payment of the remainder.

If satisfaction is now given to the Americans, we are likely soon to stand alone in this matter, for the Italians would seem to have means of satisfying their claimants by manipulating the large payments due from time to time to Messrs. Ansaldo of Genoa for repairs to Turkish men-of-war. The Russians and Germans stand in a similar position, owing to the large financial transactions in which they are engaged with Turkey, and it is significant that nothing is now heard of the Italian, German, or Russian claimants, who seem to be satisfied that means will be found, if indeed they have not been found already, to pay them, whereas, as your Lordship is aware, the British claimants are constantly pressing for settlement.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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Inclosure 1 in No. 139.

*Note Verbale.*

L'ADMINISTRATION Générale des Postes et Télégraphes de l'Empire informe la Sublime Porte que la Direction de la Poste Anglaise à Constantinople a déduit du montant de sa dette envers la dite Administration pendant les années 1896–97 une somme de 20,332 fr. 60 c. comme compensation en faveur des familles des nommés Osghian Djiridian et Joseph Honémian, employés du Bureau de la Poste Anglaise, qui auraient trouvé la mort pendant les désordres provoqués par les Arméniens et comme contrevaleur d'une lettre recommandée qui aurait été volée au dit Osghian lors de ces troubles.

Une pareille déduction ne saurait nullement être admise, ainsi que le Ministère Impérial l'a déjà fait savoir par sa note verbale Circulaire en date du 18 Juillet, 1898 ; le Gouvernement Impérial ne peut en aucune façon assumer la responsabilité de l'agitation Arménienne et des conséquences qui en sont résultées, ni payer des indemnités pour les dommages que l'on prétend avoir subis à cette occasion.

Le Ministère des Affaires Étrangères a par conséquent l'honneur de prier l'Ambassade de Sa Majesté Britannique de vouloir bien inviter la Direction susmentionnée à ne retenir de ce chef aucune somme sur la créance de l'Administration de la Poste Ottomane.

*Sublime Porte, le* 28 *Octobre*, 1900.



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Inclosure 2 in No. 139.

*Note Verbale.**

IN reply to the *note verbale* of the Sublime Porte of the 28th October relating to the accounts between the British Post Office at Constantinople and the Ottoman Department of Posts and Telegraphs, Her Majesty's Embassy has the honour to state that a deduction was made by the British Post Office from the balance due by them to the latter Department in accordance with the plain intimation to that effect which was contained in the Embassy *note verbale* No. 111 of the 18th August, 1898.

It was stated in that *note verbale* that failing settlement of the claim for compensation to the families of the two employés of the British Post Office who perished in the disturbances of 1896, Her Majesty's Government would feel compelled to deduct the amount from the sum of 36,000 francs then in the hands of Her Majesty's Postmaster-General and due for transit to the Ottoman Post Office.

No reply having been received to this communication the deduction was accordingly made, but the amount actually retained was 10,331 fr. 60 c. and not as stated in the *note verbale* under reply, 20,332 fr. 60 c.

Her Majesty's Embassy is directed by Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to take this opportunity to remind the Sublime Porte that other claims of the same nature remain still unsettled.

The details are given in the *notes verbales* No. 52 of 26th April, 1897 ; No. 126 of the 24th October, 1897 ; No. 44 of the 5th April, 1898, and No. 112 of the 18th August, 1898, showing that unless revised in the manner indicated in the last-named *note verbale* which deals with the claim of Messrs. Mardiros and Kevork Arabian, the total demand amounts to 63,938*l.* 11*s.* 4*d.*

Her Majesty's Embassy is instructed to add that it has never accepted the repudiation of liability for these claims which the Sublime Porte have asserted in their Circular *note verbale* of the 18th July, 1898, and that Her Majesty's Government is unable to assent to the view of the question which is therein laid down, and expects the Turkish Ottoman Government to come to an amicable arrangement for the settlement of these claims without unnecessary delay.

*November* , 1900.

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No. 140.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received November* 19.)

(No. 385.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November* 12, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 340, of the 26th September, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting on the behaviour of the Ottoman cavalry sent to recover from the Kurds the effects stolen from him, and on the measures which were subsequently taken for that purpose.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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Inclosure in No. 140.

*Major Maunsell to Mr. de Bunsen.*

(No. 40.)
Sir, *Van, October* 22, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to report the following additional information regarding the recent attack by Kurds on my caravan and the punishment inflicted by Government.

* As amended by Sir N. O'Conor.

At first a force of one squadron (some 60 horsemen) went to recover my effects, and on arrival at the place where the Kurds attacked me, were suddenly surrounded by Kurds who occupied the neighbouring hills and opened fire without warning.

The cavalry appear promptly to have taken flight and returned rapidly to Farashin. Here the Colonel reported that the country was unsuitable for cavalry operations, and they took no further part in the struggle. Reinforcements were now sent from Van and other places, and it seems that a body of some 400 infantry were also ambushed in a defile; although the situation was saved by a captain and twenty men scaling a height whence they could overlook the main Kurdish position, and thus caused the enemy to withdraw.

Soon after this the troops were joined by Shakir Agha, of Norduz, with 100 Kurds, who had been requested by the military Commandant of Van to render assistance; and it is generally admitted that without the help of the Kurds the troops would never have been able to deal so efficiently with the tribe.

Shakir Agha had an intimate knowledge of the country, and this with the zeal shown by Lutfi Bey, the Kaïmakam of Shattakh, effected the desired result.

Shakir has since come to Van and called at the Consulate giving his account of the affair and openly deriding the Osmanli troops. He remarked that my zaptiehs fled and left me, and that the cavalry bolted also; adding that he would not have gone at all to assist or taken such trouble, had it been only for the Osmanli Government.

Several Kurdish Chiefs, Jaafer Bey, Ibrahim Bey, Murtulla Bey, and others have recently called at the Consulate and deprecated the idea of attacking Europeans. Seeing that the tribe has been so severely punished I have told the Vali that I do not intend to prosecute the prisoners and they will probably be released, although the Vali says he intends charging them with firing on the Imperial troops.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

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No. 141.

*The Marquess of Lansdowne to Mr. de Bunsen.*

(No. 233.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, November* 20, 1900.

I HAVE received your despatch No. 377 of the 3rd instant, forwarding a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Beirout, in which he reports the measures taken to punish the persons responsible for the disturbances at Haiffa.

I have read with satisfaction Mr. Drummond Hay's report that an apology has been made to Mr. Vice-Consul Abela for the entry of a Turkish Gendarmerie officer into his house.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

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No. 142.

*The Marquess of Lansdowne to Mr. de Bunsen.*

(No. 236. Confidential.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, November* 23, 1900.

I HAVE received your despatch No. 382, Confidential, of the 6th instant, transmitting a note from the Sublime Porte, relative to the sum detained by the British Post Office at Constantinople as compensation for the two Armenian Post Office employées murdered in 1896, and forwarding a draft answer in which you propose to reopen the question of the massacre claims.

I approve the terms of your proposed reply to the Turkish Government, subject to certain alterations which have been suggested by Sir N. O'Conor, to whom the matter was referred.

I inclose a copy of the draft answer as amended by his Excellency.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

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No. 143.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Lansdowne.*—(*Received November* 26.)

(No. 400.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November* 19, 1900.

WITH reference to Lord Salisbury's despatch No. 210 of the 4th October last, I have the honour to report that I lost no time in making at the Sublime Porte a verbal demand for an indemnity of T. £ 100 as compensation to M. Sbordoni for the wound inflicted upon him during the recent Kurdish attack upon Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van.

The claim is pursuing its natural cause, and I learn that it is now under the consideration of the Sultan.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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No. 144.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Lansdowne.*—(*Received November* 26.)

(No. 401.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November* 20, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, reporting an unsuccessful Armenian incursion in the neighbourhood of Kara Kilisseh, in the Sandjak of Bayazid.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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Inclosure in No. 144.

*Consul Lamb to Mr. de Bunsen.*

(No. 19.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, November* 6, 1900.

ANOTHER incursion of Armenian revolutionaries was reported a few days ago from the neighbourhood of Kara Kilisseh, in the Bayazid Sandjak.

The Turkish authorities, being previously warned by their Agents at Erivan, were on the look-out for this band, which was accordingly driven back with the loss of one killed and one taken prisoner.

I have repeatedly drawn the attention of Her Majesty's Embassy to the inconvenience and distress occasioned by the restrictions imposed upon the circulation of Armenians in general, and the closing of the Russian frontier in particular, but it is obvious that absolutely no relaxation of prohibitive measures can be looked for so long as their insurrectionary agencies abroad persist in providing the Ottoman Government with so specious a pretext for continued severity.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HARRY H. LAMB.

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No. 145.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Lansdowne.*—(*Received November* 26.)

(No. 402.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November* 20, 1900.

WITH reference to previous correspondence on the subject of the Damascus–Mecca Railway, I have the honour to transmit copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus reporting that he learns, on what he considers to be good authority, that the Ottoman Government contemplate the purchase of the existing Damascus–Hauran Railway, instead of constructing a parallel line of their own as far as Mezerib.

I have as yet heard no confirmation of this report at Constantinople.

I transmit also copy of a further despatch from Mr. Richards reporting that the Vali of Damascus paid a visit to Mezerib on the 26th ultimo, in order to inaugurate a section of the Mecca line.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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Inclosure 1 in No. 145.

*Consul Richards to Mr. de Bunsen.*

(No. 92.)
Sir, *Damascus, October* 29, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 88 of the 23rd instant and other previous despatches on the same subject, I have the honour to inform you that the Vali went down by rail to Mezerib (in the Hauran) on the 26th instant in order to be present at the ceremony of inauguration of that section of the Damascus–Mecca Railway. The fact that it has been thought worth while to hold a separate inaugural ceremony at Mezerib after performing a similar function in Damascus only two months ago, would seem to confirm the rumour (already reported) that the Government hope to come to terms with the French Company for the purchase of the Hauran Railway, but I must confess that officially no such admission is made.

The Vali has recently, in compliance with instructions received from Constantinople, appointed a Commission consisting of eight of the chief Moslem Notables of this city, whose duty it will be to collect subscriptions for the new railway. I understand that some £ T. 40,000 have been promised already.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

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Inclosure 2 in No. 145.

*Consul Richards to Mr. de Bunsen.*

(No. 85.)
Sir, *Damascus, October* 17, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to inform you that it is reported, on what would appear to be good authority, that the Ottoman Government contemplate the purchase of the existing Damascus–Hauran Railway instead of constructing a parallel line of their own as far as Mezerib. It is said that the French Company are asking 16,000,000 fr. (640,000*l.*), while the Government offer only half that sum. Considering that the line only cost 9,000,000 fr. (360,000*l.*) to make, it is incredible that so outrageous a price should have been asked, unless it be that the Company, in true Oriental fashion, demanded twice as much as it expected ultimately to get. To judge by the Turkish offer, which, in view of the defects in the construction of the line, may be considered liberal, the manœuvre was seen through and treated as it deserved. All this, however, is so far conjectural, and I would not venture to guarantee the correctness of these figures, seeing that negotiations are still in progress at Constantinople between the interested parties.

I hope soon to be able to give you accurate information on this subject.

I may perhaps state in this connection that the Damascus–Mecca telegraph construction works are making rapid progress, the line having been already pushed on as far as Muaddham, a place situated on the caravan road to Mecca, and distant about 494 miles from Damascus. It should not be inferred from this, however, that the new wires have been laid over the whole of that distance, because telegraphic communication was already in existence between this city and the town of Salt, a distance of (about) 126 miles, so that that deduction must be made in order to ascertain the actual distance covered by the constructors of the line. This works out at 368 miles, a rate of progress which, considering that a commencement of the work was only made in March last, say, seven months or 210 days ago, is very creditable indeed.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

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No. 146.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received November* 26.)

(No. 403.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November* 20, 1900.

WITH reference to my immediately preceding despatch, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, reporting on the financial position of the Damascus–Hauran Railway.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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Inclosure in No. 146.

*Consul Richards to Mr. de Bunsen.*

(No. 87.)
Sir, *Damascus, October* 22, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to inform you of what has recently come to my official knowledge, viz., that the financial condition of the Beirout–Damascus–Hauran Railway Company at the beginning of this year was as follows:—

Receipts for the year 1899 (about) 2,500,000 fr. (100,000*l.*)
Expenditure during the same period was (about) 1,250,000 fr. (50,000*l.*)
Interest owing to the holders of debentures 1,600,000 fr. (64,000*l.*)
Therefore the deficit amounted to 350,000 fr. (14,000*l.*)

Seeing that in previous years the railway was worked at a loss of (occasionally) double this amount, the share and bondholders are, I suppose, to be congratulated.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

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No. 147.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received December* 3.)

(No. 407.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November* 23, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 381 of the 4th instant, I have the honour to report that the amount hitherto subscribed for the proposed railway from Damascus to Mecca, including the Sultan's promised contribution and the one month's salary to be paid by all officials, is now said to be nearly £ T. 810,000. Little more than £ T. 130,000 out of this sum, however, has as yet been actually encashed. The prospects of the line, therefore, are far from brilliant. I learn that in some of the provinces the authorities collect the "voluntary contributions" in the form of an addition of 50 per cent. to the taxes.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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No. 148.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received December* 3.)

(No. 408.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November* 23, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 275 of the 3rd October, I have the honour to transmit copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Aleppo, informing me of the course of action proposed to be taken by himself and his colleagues on the occasion of the approaching festival of the Sultan.

I have telegraphed approval of this course, which is in accordance with the instructions laid down by Her Majesty's Ambassador on the last similar occasion, and I have also directed Mr. Barnham to continue to observe his Excellency's directions as to illuminating the Consulate.

It is always difficult to ascertain the intentions of the Russian Embassy here, but M. Bapst, the French Chargé d'Affaires, told me a few days ago that he was sending instructions to Aleppo to the same effect, and had officially caused the Minister for Foreign Affairs to be informed that the French Government declined to enter into relations with an official whose dismissal they had demanded a few years ago, and that the French Consul at Aleppo was therefore directed to abstain from paying Ennis Pasha the customary visits.

I have held similar language to Tewfik Pasha.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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Inclosure in No. 148.

*Consul Barnham to Mr. de Bunsen.*

(No. 48.)
Sir, *Aleppo, November* 13, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to state that in view of the approaching anniversary of the Sultan's birthday, and the maintenance of Ennis Pasha as Governor-General of the vilayet, my colleagues and myself, believing that the instructions received from our respective Ambassadors on the occasion of the Sultan's Jubilee hold good on the present occasion, do not propose to take part in any act of congratulation addressed to Ennis Pasha or to any official who may perchance to be appointed to act in place of Ennis Pasha on that day.

It is reported that Ennis Pasha proposes to leave Aleppo a few days before the anniversary on a brief visit to Aintab or Antioch, and that he will again leave Ali Mohsin Pasha to receive official congratulations.

On the last occasion the Consular Body informed Ali Pasha that they could not call upon him if he represented Ennis Pasha temporarily absent through illness, and it was only upon his assurance that Ennis Pasha had been dismissed that the visit was paid. That this statement was false, and that the entire comedy was a manœuvre arranged by the Porte with a view to tide over the difficulty, there can be no possible doubt, for on the 2nd October when the Dragomans of the Consulates called upon Ali Pasha to ascertain if it were true that Ennis Pasha had been reappointed, Ali Pasha intimated plainly enough that he never had been dismissed. Therefore I submit that it would be more correct that we should ignore any invitation to attend this ceremony, whether proceeding from Ennis Pasha or another. I propose, however, to call upon the military commander and to leave cards upon the Moavin.

With reference to the telegram from his Excellency the Ambassador on the 25th August conveying instructions on this subject, I beg to be informed, by telegraph, whether it would be desirable that I should again illuminate the Consulate in order to show that our attitude towards the Vali is purely personal, and not directed towards the Sultan or the Ottoman Government.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HENRY D. BARNHAM

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No. 149.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Lansdowne.*—(*Received December* 3.)

(No. 410.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November* 24, 1900.

WITH reference to Sir N. R. O'Conor's despatch No. 231 of the 3rd July, I have the honour to transmit herewith a list of the places at which it has now been recommended, as I learn on good authority, that the proposed German railway to Bagdad shall touch. No Imperial Iradé, however, has been issued in confirmation of the agreement thus reached between the German Company and the Turkish Commission sitting at the Ministry of War. The course of the new line is roughly marked from point to point on the inclosed map.*

It will be seen that there is a considerable divergence at one or two points from the line recommended in the report inclosed in the above-mentioned despatch. This is

* Not printed.



specially the case at Adana, which is now to be touched by the new railway, instead of being left far to the south of it. The outlets at Castaboli, or Castapol, in the Gulf of Alexandretta and at Kadime Bay (Koweit) are maintained, the former being intended, no doubt, as the terminus of the temporary branch for the conveyance of railway material mentioned in my despatch No. 140, Commercial, of the 25th September.

I cannot ascertain that any progress has yet been made towards the determination of the necessary kilometric guarantee, or of the means for providing it.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN

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Inclosure in No. 149.

*List of Places to be traversed by proposed Koniah-Bagdad Railway.*

Koniah to Eregli.
Eregli to Adana.
Adana to Hamadie (branch from Hamadie to Castaboli).
Hamadie to Kazanali.
Kazanali to Tel Habesh (branch from Tel Habesh to Aleppo.)
Tel Habesh to Urfa.
Urfa to Harrar.
Harrar to Ras-el-Ain.
Ras-el-Ain to Nisibin.
Nisibin to Tel Hayal.
Tel Hayal to Mosul.
Mosul to Tekrit.
Tekrit to Bagdad (branch to Hanekin).
Bagdad to Kerbela.
Kerbela to Nedjef.
Nedjef to Bussorah.
Bussorah to Kadime and Koweit.

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No. 150.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Lansdowne.*—(*Received December* 10.)

(No. 416.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November* 28, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 359 of the 15th October, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copies of two despatches which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, reporting further on the continued depredations of the Hamidieh.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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Inclosure 1 in No. 150.

*Vice-Consul Jones to Mr. de Bunsen.*

(No. 40.)
Sir, *Kharput, October* 10, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to report that on the 29th ultimo, Yiwadjik, a Kurdish village situated at a distance of three hours to the south of Diarbekir, was attacked by a band of Hamidiehs numbering sixty horsemen, who, after killing one of the villagers and wounding some others, carried off all the animals.

About twenty hours after the occurrence the local authorities at Diarbekir were prevailed upon to send to the village some mounted zaptiehs, who shortly afterwards returned to the city without having effected any arrests.

I regret to have to add that the district of Pallu, belonging to the Province of Diarbekir, but within a day's journey from this city, is being harried by these predatory bands, who attack Christian and Moslem villages alike, whereas in the Diarbekir district the Christian villages have hitherto enjoyed a notorious immunity from the depredations of the Hamidiehs.

The presence of these troops in the neighbourhood of Pallu is naturally viewed with consternation by the inhabitants of this province (Kharput).

According to information received from the Mardin district (Mutessariflik), at Nizibin the Hamidieh forces are partly under the command of Abdurrahman Pasha, and partly under that of his son Ali, who has allied himself with Mustafa Pasha, of Jezirih, a state of internecine conflict between different bands of the Hamidieh being the result.

which, if not an unmixed evil in itself, yet renders the roads in that region thoroughly unsafe.

Again, on the road between Nizibin and Mardin, the two small tribes of Mirsina and Kotchikan are at war, but the local authorities display the greatest indifference in the matter, and at Nizibin itself the Sheikh-et-Tai (Chief of the Tai tribe), having practically constituted himself a ruler, is exacting toll from the merchants, and raising constructions in the city with the evident design of holding Nizibin, as Mustafa Pasha holds Jezirih.

In the Midzat district for some time past a feud has existed between the Haveski and Dakshuin tribes, and this state of things which may be said to have become normal still continues, involving loss of life and damage to property on either side.

At Jezirih, which is practically in the hands of Mustafa Pasha, Commander of the Hamidiehs there, Abdul Ghafur, an exile from the capital, is acting temporarily as Kaïmakam.

In the Caza of Avena great insecurity prevails owing to the raids perpetrated by Kurds of the tribe of Temmo Gori, who have recently moved to Shkara, a place near the river, whence they harass the region of Desht and Bishari. This tribe has fourteen of the repeating rifles, which some months ago were discovered to have been stolen from the Government depôt at Diarbekir.

The Mutessarif of Mardin, though not devoid of merit, appears to be doing but little to check the downward course of affairs in his district, but he is probably powerless to bring about a change for the better, as the evils resulting from the establishment of the Hamidieh forces have now, it would seem, passed beyond the control of the local authorities of the Vilayet of Diarbekir, even if those authorities had any desire to bring about such a change, a desire which, in the case of the Governor-General of that province, may be safely said to be non-existent.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. FRANCIS JONES.

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Inclosure 2 in No. 150.

*Vice-Consul Jones to Mr. de Bunsen.*

(No. 42.)
Sir, *Diarbekir, November* 13, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to report that the villages in this district continue to suffer from the raids of the licensed banditti known as the Hamidiehs, and I regret to have to add that a very recent instance of an attack by these troops on a Christian village shows that the rayahs are no longer to enjoy that immunity from these raids formerly accorded to them, as mentioned in my despatch No. 40 of the 10th ultimo.

On the 31st ultimo, Khumerik, a Kurdish village about two hours to the north of the city, was plundered by the Hamidiehs, only one house, that of a Christian, being left unmolested.

Again, on the same day, a small party of Kurds travelling along the Fakin road were attacked, and one of them killed by Hamidiehs, under the command of Sevedin Pasha.

On the 2nd instant the two Kurdish villages of Kankish and Ilkhiya, about three hours to the west, were attacked by Hamidiehs, who carried off all the live-stock belonging to the inhabitants.

On the 3rd instant, Karakilissé, another Kurdish village, was similarly treated, and on that same day the owner of the village, Mohammed Ghyuzli Agha, who had just sold about 1,200 sheep for the sum of 600 liras to enable him to buy the protection of Ibrahim Pasha, was robbed of the money and killed by Hamidiehs hostile to the Pasha.

On the 5th instant the Kurdish village of Sakkar was completely plundered by Hamidiehs, and at Mishmish a caravan coming from Aleppo was attacked and robbed of merchandize to the value of 200 liras.

On the 6th instant, Kishda, a village situated at a distance of an hour and a-half to the west, was attacked by a band of Hamidiehs, who carried off 900 animals, and on the same day Arsa Oglu, a village distant two hours to the east, was robbed of 800 animals.

On the 9th instant the Christian villages of Upper and Lower Sarraf Ghyuzli were similarly attacked and plundered, but no lives were lost, whereas the inhabitants of two Kurdish villages, who resisted their assailants on that same day, lost two of their number.



On the 11th instant an affray which occurred between Hamidiehs, under Ibrahim Pasha's command, and the followers of Osman Pasha, assumed serious proportions, several lives being lost on both sides, and an urgent appeal was made to the local authorities here for help, but the Major in command of the troops refused to send a company on the ground that by so doing he would be depriving himself of the necessary means of repressing any disturbance that might arise in the city itself.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. FRANCIS JONES.

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No. 151.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Lansdowne.*—(*Received December* 4.)

(No. 418.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November* 28, 1900.

ON the 7th instant I received a telegram from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van drawing my attention to a report which had appeared in the "Times" of the 19th October, stating that gross outrages had been committed on various Armenians, and recounting in particular that two of them had been cruelly roasted in a "tendur" or native oven: Major Maunsell stated that the report was entirely untrue and that he would send me full details by post.

From the enclosed copy of his despatch, which I have just received, your Lordship will see that the statement in the "Times" as to the beating and roasting, which though not intended for publication was sent to England for the avowed purpose of exciting the sympathy of the "Friends of Armenia," is absolutely without foundation in fact, and that the other accounts of the sufferings of Armenians are, to say the least, very highly coloured.

Dr. Raynold's letters to Miss Cantlow and the Editor of the "Times," which he had intrusted to Major Maunsell, were forwarded to London through the British Post Office to-day.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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Inclosure in No. 151.

*Major Maunsell to Mr. de Bunsen.*

(No. 44.)
Sir, *Van, November* 10, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to forward the enclosed cutting from the "Times" of the 19th October which I have just received.

The English lady mentioned is, undoubtedly, Miss Wilson, as there is no other missionary answering to the description here.

Dealing first with the statement of a gross outrage committed on two Armenians here by beating them and roasting them in a "tendur" or native oven, I may say that it has not the slightest foundation in fact.

I first learnt of the statement on opening the newspaper in question and at once set about enquiring as to its truth.

In the first instance if such an outrage had taken place in September I should have quickly heard something of it, as I have never found Armenians slow to state their grievances.

I called on Miss Wilson at once to obtain details, and she told me that an Armenian had been there, and given her the details but she had not asked any questions as to the name of the village, the persons outraged, but had written off an account of the supposed occurrence to England by next post.

She told me that her letter was not intended for publication, but merely for circulation among the "Friends of Armenia" in order to rouse their interest in this country!

She gave me the name of her Armenian informant and I sent for him to the Consulate.

The man is a respectable Armenian bookseller who at once frankly denied that he had told Miss Wilson any such story; he had no knowledge of such an outrage or of trees having been taken by the soldiers without payment. Miss Wilson's knowledge of Armenians is still slight, and she uses an interpreter, an orphan Armenian girl in whom

Miss Wilson apparently places implicit confidence, but who abuses it to fill her mind with all sorts of imaginary horrors. She most probably invented the story.

The Armenian cannot even think of anything that could have led up to such a story except he said that in the village of Sikhe close by an Armenian woman saw some soldiers coming up the street, her daughter got frightened and hid in the oven, which was then cold, until they passed.

The soldiers passed through and molested nobody and I have heard of no such cases.

I then went to Dr. Raynolds, the head of the Mission, and he was astonished, having heard nothing whatever of any outrage or any accoount of it from Miss Wilson.

Dr. Raynolds at once volunteered to write a denial to Miss Cantlow which he has given me to enclose as probably the Turkish postal officials have by this time got orders to stop all letters to that address.

As regards the last paragraph of the "Times" statement, he told me that none of the girls were in any danger whatever.

Seeing that the Turkish officials here have adopted of recent years a very conciliatory attitude towards the Mission, and we have endeavoured to promote good feeling between the Christians and Moslems, he thought that if such a statement as that published in the "Times" remained untraversed, his Mission would be brought needlessly under suspicion of the authorities here and in Constantinople resulting in various petty reprisals, he decided also to write an explanatory letter to the "Times" editor placing the true facts of the case before him.

As regards the statements of taxing of villagers I need scarcely say that almost all taxation in this country is collected in kind from the villages, the principal exception being the "bedelie askerie" or military exemption tax for Christians, which is fixed at 2 mejidies, payable either in kind or money. The price of corn in Van market in the middle of September was 40 to 45 piastres a chap (2*s*. 10*d*. a bushel of 37 lbs.), and the price fixed by the Vali and the Council of the vilayet was 40 piastres a chap for those who wished to give corn in place of money for their taxes; so that it was immaterial to the villager which method he used for payment. Just now, owing to the heavy autumn rains which ensure a good spring crop, the price of wheat in Van market has fallen to 35 piastres so that a villager would gain somewhat instead of lose by paying in kind.

The Government to obviate this are now altering the price fixed hitherto to suit the state of the market.

The case of the Armenian who was robbed of £9 is true. While Shakir Agha was engaged in assisting to punish the Zshiriki, some of the Shemsikki, his enemies, thought the occasion a good one to rob a caravan going from Van to Norduz in charge of Shakir's brother-in-law; which they did, severely wounding the latter and robbing him of more than 50*l*.

The Armenian had, unfortunately, chosen to travel with this caravan and suffered also.

The perpetrators have now fled to Persia.

The "Times" account omits all reference to what the Kurds suffered; and it would appear as if only Armenians had been so treated.

This year there have been no instances of serious raids by Kurds or Christians and what disturbances have occurred have been intertribal quarrels among Kurds and lifting of each other's cattle.

In fact, in my opinion, Kurdish animosity is now rather more directed against the Turks than against Christians.

I may add that no one is a greater admirer of Miss Wilson's missionary zeal than myself, but I am afraid it occasionally outruns her discretion.

I have, &c.

(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

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*Extract from the "Times" of October* 19, 1900.

THE STATE OF VAN.—Miss E. Cantlow, secretary to the Friends of Armenia, writes stating that the Turkish authorities speak with their usual disregard of facts when they assert that "the different elements of the population in Asia Minor are living in perfect harmony." (The "Times," August 30, 1900). In proof of this statement she quotes a letter from Van written by an Englishwoman, who has gone out on behalf of the society to take charge of the orphan children. The letter was written about the middle of last month, and the writer, after referring to a sheep raid and to Major Maunsell's affair, says: "As the harvest has been plentiful the Government are down upon the poor villagers for taxes, and are taking their grain at 1*s*. 8*d*. a bushel, and in the city they are paying 5*s*. a bushel. A good harvest in many ways in this land is scarcely a blessing. They are building some new barracks here that may accommodate more soldiers, so the Turks went into a village close by to get wood where they could. They were cutting down some trees, and the owners expostulated with them, whereupon they bound one to a tree after beating them, and two more they put down a 'tong' and put the lid on. A 'tong' is a place where bread is baked, a kind of deep stone well with a fire at the bottom, and the bread is put on the sides to bake, as it is very thin, and will stick. The fire was out when they were put in, but still very hot: they were both taken out in an exhausted condition. The same week we came from Sourp Crecore an Armenian had been to the city and sold some sheep to pay a debt of 9*l*. He was coming over the mountain in company with some Kurds when they were all suddenly set upon by mounted Kurds, everything being taken from them, and they were left naked with their hands, feet, and eyes tied up, and to make them more secure large stones were put on their chests so as almost to stop their breathing. Thus they were left on the very top of a mountain where there were bears and wolves. After a great struggle one managed to get free and help the others, when they met some villagers, who found something to cover them, and they returned to the city to inform the Government, who are now after these robbers. Thus things go on in this land, every man's hand against his neighbour; it is dreadful. L—— (one of the orphans kept by the Friends of Armenia) is about to be married. May we fill up your vacancies with girls, as there are a great number pleading for admission who are in great danger?" Whether the Society can accede to this request and admit fresh orphans, Miss Cantlow adds, must depend on whether funds come in readily, as their first duty is to the children already admitted.



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No. 152.

*Mersina Railway Committee to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received December* 5.)

8, *Great Winchester Street, London,*
*December* 4, 1900.

My Lord,

THE Undersigned are the present members of a Committee appointed in 1891 at a meeting of the share and bond-holders of the Mersina, Tarsus, and Adana Railway Company, to represent the share and bond-holders, in England and Belgium, of that Company.

In this capacity we have received a copy of a Memorial addressed to Lord Salisbury in October last by tw of the directors of the Mersina, Tarsus, and Adana Railway Company on the subject of the grant of a Concession to a German group for the construction of a railway from Konieh to Bagdad, to the great detriment of the interests that we represent.

We desire respectfully to indorse the Petition contained in the said Memorial, and beg that we may be permitted to submit the following statement in support.

The Mersina, Tarsus, and Adana Railway was constructed under a Concession from His Majesty the Sultan to run for fifty years from the 8th January, 1883, after which date it is to revert to the Ottoman Government without any payment other than for rolling-stock, plant and stores. No guarantee of interest nor subvention was attached to the Concession.

The capital for construction was subscribed chiefly in England, the remainder being subscribed in Belgium, and to a great extent by British subjects at Constantinople.

The length of the railway is forty-two miles, passing through an agricultural district whose local traffic could hardly pay working expenses, but it was known that when the line was completed to Adana there would be important tributary traffic from the eastern portion of Cilicia, from some of the caravan routes over the Amanus Pass, as well as from the Karamanian Plain over the Khulek Boghaz and Melemenji Pass.

Even the combined traffic has, however, only sufficed during the fifteen years since the railway was completed to pay an average of about 2½ per cent. on the debenture debt of the Company and nothing on its share capital.

We have understood, and we believe rightly, that, until quite recently, it has invariably been the policy of the Ottoman Government not to grant Concessions for lines that could divert traffic from existing railways and to give to the latter priority for extensions.

In this belief the directors of our Company have applied for and incessantly urged the Ottoman Government to grant Concessions to our Company for extensions in a north-westerly direction to Konieh, in an easterly direction towards Marash and Aintab, and in a southerly direction to Yourmourtalik. As we have been advised, much encouragement has from time to time been given by the Ottoman Ministers to our directors in Constan-

tinople to lead them to believe that these Concessions or some of them would be granted to our Company.

It now appears, however, that the Ottoman Government, disregarding the claims of our Company, has granted a Concession, accompanied by a guarantee of interest on capital, to a German group representing the Anatolian Railway Company for the construction of a railway, in extension of the Anatolian Railway, from Konieh to Bagdad. This group have, as we are informed, adopted a route from Konieh passing a short distance to its eastward, thence to the Bay of Yourmourtalik on the Gulf of Alexandretta, and eastwardly, from the vicinity of Adana or from Yourmourtalik viâ Marash or Aintab.

It is obvious that if the line designed by the German group be constructed without regard to the interests of our railway, all traffic we have hitherto obtained from Karamania and Eastern Cilicia will be diverted from our railway, and not only will the small amount of interest paid on our debentures cease to be earned, but there will be no hope of redeeming either our debentures or share capital out of earnings before our railway reverts to the Ottoman Government.

We are informed, and believe, that the German Government is favourably disposed to bring some pressure to bear on the German group holding the Concession, so that a friendly arrangement may be made with our Company to prevent what would otherwise be in effect a total confiscation of a large amount of British capital, and that a friendly representation from our Foreign Office would greatly facilitate such arrangement.

We therefore respectfully appeal to your Lordship to have such friendly representation made at Berlin as may aid in saving the interests of those we represent.

Should your Lordship desire any further information or explanations, one or more of the members of our Committee would attend any appointment at the Foreign Office.

We are, &c.
(Signed) JOHN COLLINSON, *Chairman.*
[Signature illegible.]
C. M. L. McHARDY.

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[Inclosures not printed.]

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No. 153.

*The Marquess of Lansdowne to Mr. de Bunsen.*

(No. 251.)
*Foreign Office, December* 7, 1900.

Sir,

I HAVE received your despatch No. 408 of the 23rd ultimo, and I approve your instructions to Her Majesty's Consul at Aleppo in regard to his attitude towards the Vali, Ennis Pasha, in connection with the celebration of the Sultan's birthday.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

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No. 154.

*The Marquess of Lansdowne to Viscount Gough.*

(No. 294.)
*Foreign Office, December* 7, 1900.

My Lord,

I TRANSMIT to your Lordship herewith a copy of a letter which has been received from the representatives of the English shareholders of the Mersina, Tarsus, and Adana Railway Company, requesting the assistance of Her Majesty's Government for the protection of their interests.*

A copy of the reply which has been returned to this letter is also inclosed.†

You will observe from Mr. de Bunsen's despatch No. 146, Commercial, of the 9th October last, which is printed in Section 2 of the 15th October of the Confidential correspondence regarding Asiatic Turkey, that the French Ambassador at Berlin has made a representation to the German Government with a view to an arrangement between the Mersina, Tarsus, and Adana Company and the German group holding the

* No. 135.

† No. 155.



Concession for a railway from Konieh to Bagdad, and has received a satisfactory reply.

I should wish your Lordship to express verbally to the German Minister for Foreign Affairs the hope of Her Majesty's Government that the German Government will favour a friendly arrangement between the two Companies on equitable terms.

You should point out that any unfair treatment of the Mersina, Tarsus, and Adana Railway Company would undoubtedly affect unfavourably the prospect of obtaining financial assistance in this country for the construction of the railway to Bagdad.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

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No. 155.

*Foreign Office to the Mersina, Tarsus, and Adana Railway Company.*

*Foreign Office, December* 7, 1900.

Gentlemen,

I AM directed by the Marquess of Lansdowne to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 31st October, requesting the assistance of Her Majesty's Government for the protection of the interests of the Mersina, Tarsus, and Adana Railway Company, and to state that his Lordship has consulted Sir N. O'Conor, who is now in England, in regard to the matter.

You are aware of the representations which Sir N. O'Conor made to the German Ambassador at Constantinople in April last, with the object of bringing about an arrangement between the Company and the German group which holds the Concession for a railway from Konieh to Bagdad.

Lord Lansdowne is informed that the French Ambassador at Berlin addressed a representation to the German Government in the autumn with a view to facilitating such an agreement, and received a satisfactory reply.

Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Berlin will be instructed to make a communication to the German Government with the same object.

I am, &c.
(Signed) T. H. SANDERSON.

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No. 156.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Lansdowne.*—(*Received December* 10.)

(No. 421.)
*Constantinople, November* 30, 1900.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 352 of the 10th ultimo, in which I ventured to suggest the expediency of warning the Mussulmans of India against appeals for subscriptions for the Damascus-Mecca Railway, I have the honour to state that, according to the "Ikdam" of the 27th instant, a speech was delivered in Amritsa by a travelling Moslem Ulema, one Seid Abdul Hak Effendi, of Bagdad, warmly recommending the scheme to his co-religionists.

It is not necessary for me to trouble your Lordship with a full translation of the Ulema's address, the substance of which is briefly as follows:—

Moslems all the world over are deeply grateful to the Sultan, their Sovereign, for the scheme he has set on foot, and the generous contribution of £T. 50,000 which he has made; but it is too much to expect that Ottoman Moslems alone should defray the cost of this great undertaking, which will so largely facilitate visits to the Holy Cities, and it therefore behoves all Moslems as a religious duty to second the noble efforts of their Sovereign.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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No. 157.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Lansdowne.*—(*Received December* 10.)

(No. 424.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December* 3, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 402 of the 20th November last, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Beirut, reporting that a Commission of engineer officers have been examining the Haifa–Damascus Railway Works, apparently with the intention of ascertaining the best means of utilizing them in connection with the projected line to Mecca.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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Inclosure in No. 157.

*Consul-General Drummond Hay to Mr. de Bunsen.*

(No. 83.)
Sir, *Beirut, November* 22, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 63, Confidential, of the 26th September, regarding the Haifa–Damascus railroad and the alleged desire of the Turkish Government to connect it with the Hedjaz line, I am informed by Mr. Abela, Acting Vice-Consul at Haifa, that the Mutessarif of Acre inspected the works of the railroad on the 16th instant by order of the Ministry of Public Works, and on his return from Nazareth he called at the office of the Company to collect further details. These were all given to him with the exception of an estimate he demanded of the expenses of the undertaking, which Dr. Schumacher declined to furnish. The latter also informed Mr. Abela that two Staff Officers, Colonels Bedri Bey and Izzet Bey, had called on him and asked to see the chart of the line. After examining it they pointed out the most convenient point from whence the line could be prolonged to meet the Hedjaz railroad, and they both appeared to have already studied the subject, and to be thoroughly acquainted with the features of the country through which the railroad would pass.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. DRUMMOND HAY.

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No. 158.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.*—(*Received December* 10.)

(No. 425.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December* 3, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 416 of the 28th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, reporting further cases of depredations by the Hamidiehs in that vilayet.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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Inclosure in No. 158.

*Vice-Consul Jones to Mr. de Bunsen.*

(No. 43.)
Sir, *Diarbekir, November* 20, 1900.

IN continuation of my despatch No. 42 of the 13th instant relative to the depredations committed by the Hamidiehs in this district, I have the honour to report that the Christian villages of Lower Sarraf Ghyuzli and Arsa Oglu were completely plundered by a band of these troops on the 15th instant, and on the following day the village of Holan experienced similar treatment at the hands of the Hamidiehs.

On the 18th instant a body of these troops at Karabaghtché on the Severek road



attacked a party of camel-drivers, and took possession of the whole drove, consisting of ninety camels; and last night the village of Muderras, half of the population of which is Christian, and the other half Moslem, was plundered by a band of Hamidiehs.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. FRANCIS JONES.

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No. 159.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Lansdowne.*—(*Received December* 10.)

(No. 426.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December* 3, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 363 of the 22nd October, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, reporting on the result of the operations conducted by the Mutessarif of Erzinghian against the Kurds who attacked the Russian Consul-General in the district of Kozlitchan. Twenty-seven persons have been arrested, six of whom are declared to have been notorious brigands.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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Inclosure in No. 159.

*Consul Lamb to Mr. de Bunsen.*

(No. 20.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, November* 20, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 17 of the 7th October last, I learn from official sources that the operations conducted by the Mutessarif of Erzinghian against the Kurds who attacked the Russian Acting Consul-General and Colonel Prjevalski while travelling in the district of Kozlitchan have resulted in the arrest of twenty-seven persons, six of whom are declared to have been notorious brigands.

Details of these operations are wanting, but that the arrests were not effected without considerable resistance is apparent from the fact that seven of the prisoners are reported as wounded, while three other Kurds are stated to have been killed. A small quantity of arms and other property were also seized.

An important section of the Sheikh Hassanli division of the Dersim Kurds, who had hitherto enjoyed a practical independence of all government, has tendered its submission to the authorities.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HARRY H. LAMB.

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No. 160.

*Foreign Office to Mr. J. Collinson.*

Sir, *Foreign Office, December* 10, 1900.

I AM directed by the Marquess of Lansdowne to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 4th instant, requesting the assistance of Her Majesty's Government for the protection of the interests of the Mersina, Tarsus, and Adana Railway Company.

Mr. Pears and Sir W. Whittall, of Constantinople, recently addressed a letter to Lord Salisbury on this subject, and I am to transmit to you the accompanying copy of the reply which has been sent to them.*

I am, &c.
(Signed) T. H. SANDERSON.

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* No 155.

## No. 161.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Lansdowne.*—(*Received December* 24.)

(No. 437.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, December* 17, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 400 of the 19th November, reporting the action I had taken on receipt of the instruction contained in Lord Salisbury's despatch No. 210 of the 12th October, I have the honour to state that I have to-day received from the Ottoman Ministry of Finance the sum of £T. 100 as compensation to the Dragoman of Her Majesty's Vice-Consulate at Van for injuries received during the attack by Kurds on Major Maunsell, and for the expenses entailed for medical attendance.

I propose to forward the money to Mr. Acting Vice-Consul Satow to be handed to Mr. Sbordoni.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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## No. 162.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Lansdowne.*—(*Received December* 24.)

(No. 438.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, December* 17, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van giving an interesting account of the state of affairs at Shemsdinan and in the Nestorian country where he recently made a journey.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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Inclosure in No. 162.

*Major Maunsell to Mr. de Bunsen.*

(No. 47.)

Sir, *Van, November* 18, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to forward the following Report of my recent journey into the Hekkiari Sandjak of this vilayet:—

The Shekak Kurds over the Persian border have been much disturbed this year, and practically closed the trade routes from the Urmia Plain into Persia.

The Persian authorities took certain steps against them this autumn with the result that one Chief, Muhammad Emin, was captured and taken into Urmia.

He was released on payment of a fine of 5,000 tomans, which his followers collected by pillage and robbery in all directions as soon as they heard that that was all that was necessary for his release.

The principal instigator of all the robberies, Jaafer Bey, son of Mehmed Pasha, was allowed to go quite free probably after extensive bribery of officials; while his father left for Tabreez to meet the Shah on his return from Europe.

The Shekak did endeavour to cross into Turkey, but were prevented by the frontier posts of regular troops which were specially strengthened.

The notorious Sheref Bey, the Hamidieh Chief, who lives on the frontier near Bashkala, has been mainly occupied this year with raids into Persia directed usually against the Jaafer Bey mentioned above, but has committed many petty depredations on this side of the frontier, and the Bashkala authorities, including the Mutasserif, seem powerless to do anything to check him, owing to his position as "Mir Alai" of a Hamidieh regiment, and specially decorated by the Sultan.

After the complete failure of the Vali in the spring of last year, to have him tried and punished for some of his many offences, the authorities now leave him alone.

I saw Sheikh Hamid Pasha, an influential Kurdish Sheikh of an old family, who lives close to Bashkala, and who is always most friendly to Christians, and has a good influence with the Government.



The present Mutessarif of Bashkala is a young, energetic official, who works very well with the Vali, and is an immense improvement on his predecessor Mahmud Pasha.

I visited the Shemsdinan Caza, with its capital Neri, which is also the residence of Sheikh Muhammad Sadik, son of the late Sheikh Obeidullah.

When I passed through, the Sheikh was absent at his summer residence at Katuna, close to the Persian frontier, and was engaged in extensive preparations for a visit to Tabreez to meet the Shah.

As I have already reported, he was obliged to abandon this visit owing to the representations of the Vali, and the influence of Sheikh Hamid Pasha, who was specially sent to dissuade him. He has three sons:

1. Seyyid Muhammad Reshid, 18 years old, but epileptic, and unlikely to succeed his father in consequence.
2. Seyyid Taha, 9 years old, the favourite, and probable successor to his father.
3. A son 2 years old.

The Sheikh is engaged at Neri in building a remarkably large stone house, four storeys high, and is reputed extremely rich, chiefly from his trade in tobacco, a large quantity of which is grown in the Shemsdinan valleys.

He has not the great influence among the surrounding Kurds that I thought he had, and this is chiefly due to his grasping avarice and treacherous disposition.

The chief Kurdish tribes in the neighbourhood are noted on the annexed list.

Most of the important tribe of Heriki are against the Sheikh.

The Kurds of the populous Zerzan Valley are nominally with him, but are really afraid to be otherwise.

The Oramar Kurds, under their notorious robber Chief, Sutu, are under his influence.

The Kurds round Neri, and some in Tergavvar, in Persia, are his supporters, but he has entirely alienated the large tribes of Girdi and Baradost by his treacherous murder of one of their Chiefs, who claimed the right of asylum with one of the Sheikh's followers.

The Sidan section of the Heriki, under Kerim Khan, made a successful attack on the Sheikh's men this summer, killing twenty of them.

Altogether, as far as I could judge, there seems no likelihood of this Sheikh attaining to the great influence which his father, Obeidullah, possessed, or of becoming leader of such a revolt as he carried out.

Musa Bey, the Chief of the Khumara Kurds, is an excellent specimen of the Kurdish Chief—always most friendly to Christians; is one of the old ruling families—that of the Mir of Shemsdinan. He is extremely hostile to the Sheikh.

The Mattran of the Nestorians lives in the Zerzan Valley, and is at present on good terms with the Sheikh, but in great terror of him.

When Hekkiari was an independent vilayet, the Turks had extensive schemes to appoint Kaïmakams to the various mountain districts; but of recent years most of these ideas seem to have been dropped, and, with the exception of Gavvar, Julamerk, and Shemsdinan, where troops and the regular form of government is maintained, the mountain districts are permitted to settle their own affairs under their own tribal leaders, paying a small annual tribute.

In Neri the Government seem to have abrogated most of their authority to the Sheikh, the present Kaïmakam being a nonentity, who drifts on by effacing himself and doing whatever the Sheikh requires.

It will be remembered that the Sheikh endeavoured to strangle his predecessor, who showed himself energetic and assertive.

Of the other nahies of the Shemsdinan Caza, Girdi has no Mudir or representative of the Turkish authority.

The Plain of Baradost, close to Girdi, but in the Mosul Vilayet, is also practically independent.

For the deep mountain valley of Heriki a Mudir was apparently appointed, but I found him installed in Neri; he told me he had not been to Heriki for six months, and was soon leaving for another post.

Zerzan nahie has a Kurdish Chief acting as Mudir, but this district is entirely in the Sheikh's power.

For Khumara nahie Mosa Bey is Mudir.

With a strong Central Government, able to control the various factions, this kind of local self-government would be very suitable to these mountain districts; but, as matters stand at present, the result is chaos, with ceaseless intertribal quarrels, murders, pillage, and raids. There is no prominent leader just at present to make the situation particularly

dangerous to the Government, and there are many sections bitterly hostile to one another.

The notorious Sutu, Chief of the Oramar Kurds, who has of late years done so much pillaging in the Christian valleys, is just now the most prominent leader, as, while I was passing through, he had just completed a successful attack on the Reikan tribe of Kurds in the mountains to the west of him, and this will unfortunately increase his prestige.

On my return to Van I represented this to the Vali, who promised to do his best to prevent any further attacks on the Christian valleys.

The present Mutessarif may be trusted to do much more to keep order than his predecessor of last year. But then, again, the Christians are every whit as quarrelsome, ignorant, and reckless as their Kurdish neighbours, and they are mixed up in the inter-tribal quarrels and blood-feuds of the latter.

For example, during Sutu's quarrel with Reikan several armed Nestorians from Jelu went to assist Sutu, and this will probably create a blood-feud with Reikan.

If they hoped to gain Sutu's gratitude I am afraid they will not be successful.

Then, again, when in Marta Marzaia, the principal village of the Christian valley of Jelu, I found relations very strained with the Christian valley of Baz, a little lower down, the cause being a grazing dispute.

They were rather afraid of Baz, who are good fighting men, but thought that if they obtained Sutu's assistance they would be able to extinguish their opponents.

I need scarcely say I did my utmost to dissuade them from anything of the sort.

The Bishop of Jelu is a boy 14 years old, but, strange to say, has much influence for good, gives judgments, &c., which are accepted. He is very bright and intelligent, and Mr. Browne hopes to get an opportunity of educating him.

In Marta Marzaia, on a village quarrel taking place, the opponents seize their guns, rush out on to the hillside, where, after a few hours' firing, honour is probably satisfied.

The village is the centre of the numerous Nestorian beggars, who travel to all parts of the world and generally return with 150*l.* to 200*l.*

Many of them know English. One old man told me he knew London well; but just then could only remember the name of one street, which was Bow Street!

Another had fought as an American sailor in the Spanish war; another had just returned from the Brazils, had lost some money in Lisbon, and wished me to help him to recover it, &c.

Several men were growing their hair long preparatory to a tour as Russian priests through Russia. I may add that it is apparently only from this valley of Jelu that the beggars go out.

They are quite shameless, and a more jovial and reckless set of beggars I have never met.

Mr. Browne accompanied me through the Christian valleys of Ishtazin, Jelu, and Diz, and so to Kochannes, where I met Mar Shimun. It was now two years since Mr. Browne had been into Van, so I thought it advisable that he should accompany me there so as to visit the Vali and the various officials, of whom he seems to have got wrong ideas while at Kochannes.

The Vali was extremely glad to see him, and the visit did away with much mutual distrust on both sides, and made things very hopeful for the future.

As regards the question of opening a school in Kochannes, the Vali explained that it was impossible for him to give permission for a foreigner to open a school, and that long and tedious references to Constantinople would be necessary.

However, if Mar Shimun sent in an application for a school, he would consider it favourably, and although in Mar Shimun's name Mr. Browne could teach there, and it would be practically his. This is the only possible arrangement at present.

When Mr. Browne returned to Kochannes he induced Mar Shimun to send a most friendly telegram to the Vali, and relations are now on a most cordial footing.

Shortly after, Zia Bey, the Inspector sent from Constantinople to inquire into the condition of the Nestorians, in answer to a request from Mar Shimun, arrived in Julamerk.

Mar Shimun and Zia Bey have got on very well together, although probably little will result from the inspection.

At any rate, Zia Bey seems to have brought no instructions from Constantinople hostile to Christians such as I feared in my despatch, but seems to have been told to smooth things over as best he could.

He sent for the Maliks of Tiari to come to Julamerk to make peace with the men of Lewin after the raid of last year, but they were afraid to leave their valleys. On the



representations of Mr. Heazell, our missionary who lived in Tiari last winter, they were induced to come to a point half-way, where Zia Bey met them, arranged a peace, and assured them that the roads would be opened whenever they came to Julamerk.

This action ought to clear away any suspicion the Turks had of our missionaries harbouring revolutionary schemes and raising the Nestorians against the Government.

I have consistently tried to induce Mr. Browne to work as much as he could with the Government while there was a good Vali occupying the post at Van, and I think I have now succeeded.

The Turkish Government, bad and feeble though it is, is all that exists at present, and he must make the best of a bad job.

The Catholic Mission of Mosul a short time ago sent a deputation to meet some of the Tiari men, and offered them a modern rifle each if they became Catholic.

I heard this almost incredibly foolish offer confirmed from several sources, and finally the Vali himself told me of it.

Its effect on Catholic efforts ought to be annihilating.

Throughout this summer two attempts have been made by the Catholics of Van to penetrate the Nestorian country, but in each case they were turned back; one priest, just before my arrival, was not allowed down by Julamerk, but sent round by Rowanduz to Mosul.

The Russians are making no attempts whatever at present to spread their influence on this side of the frontier, and they are quiet in the Urmia Plain.

In Diza, in Gavvar, there is a small orphanage kept by a pastor, Isa Khamis, who has been educated in England, and has a brother studying as a doctor there now. Money is is sent by the Rev. W. Essery, Alliance House, 7, Adam Street, Strand, who seems to repose implicit confidence in Khamis.

I paid a surprise visit to the orphanage in Diza, and found a small house, comfortably furnished, in which Khamis lived with his family.

Passing through the kitchen I found one dirty, half-naked, boy, whom I was told was an orphan, and that the rest were at work in the fields, so, presumably, the establishment is conducted on the "Dotheboy's Hall" principle.

The staff for 12 orphans was 2 women-servants, 1 man-servant, and 1 teacher, while Khamis and his wife did manager and manageress, and seemed entirely above any teaching work.

Thus these specious hypocrites fatten on money wheedled out of amiable old ladies in England.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

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List of Kurdish Tribes in Southern Hekkiari-Van Vilayet.

The large nomad tribe of Heriki is divided into the following sub-sections:—

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Sarhadi .. .. | Abdulla Agha .. .. | 300 tents. |
| Kanispi .. .. | Salih Agha .. .. | 100 „ |
| Mamsheikhan .. .. | Piru .. .. .. | 150 „ |
| Avdian .. .. .. | Abdul Kerim Agha .. .. | 200 „ |
| Khiderian .. .. | Khoja Agha .. .. | 400 „ |
| Sidan .. .. .. | Kerim Khan .. .. | 500 „ |
| Doshki .. .. .. | Bayazid Agha and Temir Agha | Eight villages at south end of the Gavvar Plain. |
| Diri (section of Kartoshi) .. | Rustem Bey .. .. | Six villages east side of Gavvar; chief village, Dara. |
| Bilijnan (section of Piniashli) | Muhammad Agha, Nejid Bey .. | Fifteen villages between north end of Gavvar and Zab Valley. Muhammad Agha lives in Harwasa. |
| Khumara .. .. | Musa Bey .. .. .. | Ten villages in Khumara. |
| Zerzan .. .. .. | Aya Khan .. .. .. | Twelve villages in Zerzan. |
| Oramar .. .. | Sutu .. .. .. | In one villarge of Oramar of 200 houses. |
| Girdi .. .. .. | Muhammad Agha, Muhammad Emin, Mel-a-Mahmud, Shekir Agha | Thirty villages in Girdi. |
| Baradost .. .. | Latif Khan, Muhammad Sherif, Muhammad Said | Twenty-five villages in Baradost (Mosul Vilayet). |

(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

No. 163.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Lansdowne.*—(*Received December* 24.)

(No. 439.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December* 17, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 425 of the 3rd instant, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir reporting further on the depredations of the Hamidieh regiments and the spread of disorder in the district.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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Inclosure in No. 163.

*Vice-Consul Jones to Mr. de Bunsen.*

(No. 44.)
Sir, *Diarbekir, December* 4, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 43 of the 20th ultimo, I have the honour to report that various other villages have recently been plundered by the Hamidiehs in this district.

On the 19th ultimo the village of Hamrani was raided by a band of these troops, and on the following day four villages, viz., Yenidjé, Teshtano, Dengetchick, and Dikkyani experienced similar treatment.

On the 22nd ultimo the villages of Shekrvirân and Ardullah were attacked and raided by Hamidiehs belonging to the forces under the orders of Ibrahim Pasha.

On the following day two villages Omerghan and Kazukhtépé were plundered by Kurds of the Terika tribe, who are not as yet enrolled among the Hamidiehs—one man being killed at the first-named village.

Again on the 23rd ultimo, an affray occurred between the followers of Sevedin Pasha and Kurds of the tribe named with the result that four of the Terikas were killed —the scene of the contest being distant not more than an hour from this city.

On the 24th ultimo the two villages of Peshabur and Zakho in the Jezireh district of the Mardin division, containing a mixed population of Moslems and Christians in equal proportion, were plundered by the followers of Mustafa Pasha, the Commander of the Hamidiehs in that region.

In view of the systematic raids carried on for some time past by these troops of robbers the action of the Central Government in heaping favours and decorations on their Chiefs Ibrahim Pasha and Mustafa Pasha is viewed with much disfavour by the peaceable inhabitants of these districts.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. FRANCIS JONES.

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No. 164.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Lansdowne.*—(*Received December* 31.)

(No. 442.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December* 22, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 438 of the 17th instant, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Acting Vice-Consul at Van, reporting the return of Zia Bey from the Hekkiari district and the measures he proposes for the maintenance of order there.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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Inclosure in No. 164.

*Acting Vice-Consul Satow to Mr. de Bunsen.*

(No. 49.)
Sir, *Van, December* 4, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to inform you that Zia Bey, the Mufetish, recently sent from Constantinople to report on the condition of the Hekkiari district, has returned from his tour of inspection, having spent some six weeks in those parts.

In his Report to Constantinople he has proposed that the following measures should be taken with a view to placing the district in a more satisfactory condition as regards the preservation of life and property.

It appears that there are three passes by which all movement is carried on.

At each of these three passes, viz., Dreis, Kaval, and Meranish, all in the Nahieh of Lewin, it is proposed that guard-houses should be established with garrisons of some fifty men a-piece. These will remain out all the summer, and will control all movement in the district which must pass through these points. In winter, as the passes are closed with snow, the garrisons will be withdrawn and concentrated at Lewin.

It was at a distance of four hours from Meranish, a very wild district, that Major Maunsell was recently attacked.

It is also proposed to replace the present Government house (Konak) at Julamerk by a more suitable building.

The cost of the various buildings is estimated at £ T. 1,000. Of this sum, £ T. 300 would be provided by the Treasury of the vilayet, and the remainder contributed in kind, viz., wood, stone, &c., by the villagers.

During his tour, Zia Bey spent several days at Kochannes, where he saw Mr. Browne, of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission, and discussed the various proposals with him.

Mr. Browne has written to me warmly supporting Zia Bey's plans. As he has considerable knowledge of the country, his support is a proof of the value of the proposed measures, at any rate, from a Nestorian point of view.

The Vali has written to Constantinople expressing his complete approval of Zia Bey's proposals, and suggesting that he should be allowed to remain here until the spring to personally superintend the work.

Zia Bey seems earnest in wishing to carry through his plans, and is very desirous of remaining in person to supervise. He does not wish to give in his Report and then let the matter drop.

Should the permission for his stay not be granted, plans which seem likely to produce a more satisfactory state of things in Hekkiari will undoubtedly be shelved.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. E. SATOW.

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No. 165.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Lansdowne.*—(*Received December* 28.)

(No. 443. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December* 24, 1900.

I OBSERVE that the newspapers have published a telegram from Washington, stating that it is there considered that the presentation of a British note at Constantinople on the subject of claims arising out of the massacres, as admitted in a reply to a question in the House of Commons, had unfavourably affected the prospects of the American negotiation, undertaken for a similar purpose, and which was connected with the signature of a contract for the building of a Turkish cruiser in Messrs. Cramp's yards.

Your Lordship's despatch No. 236, Confidential, of the 23rd ultimo, approving the proposed terms of the note in question was received by me on the 1st instant. The American negotiation had entered upon a critical phase at that date, and being desirous of taking no action which might render more difficult the attainment of the object which my United States' colleague had in view, I resolved, after a confidential conversation with him, to hold back my note for a few days. Mr. Griscom thought that the Sublime Porte would perhaps be deterred, by the renewal of the British demands, from concluding a bargain which might furnish England with new

arguments in support of her own claim, and I felt that these apprehensions were not entirely unfounded.

I waited, therefore, for ten days, and then told Mr. Griscom that I could not withhold indefinitely a communication which I had been instructed to make, and asked him whether his negotiation was nearing a conclusion. He replied that Messrs. Cramp's agent had not yet signed the contract for the cruiser, but that everything was settled except a few minor details, and that he had now no fear of Turkey drawing back. He begged, therefore, that I would not delay my note any longer on his account, and he expressed his sincere thanks for the assistance which he was good enough to say that I had rendered him.

I sent in my note in the terms approved by your Lordship on the 12th instant.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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No. 166.

*Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Lansdowne.*—(*Received December* 31.)

(No. 444.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December* 24, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 431 of the 30th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, reporting the arrival of an Italian engineer to take charge of the construction of the projected railway to Mecca.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

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Inclosure in No. 166.

*Consul Richards to Mr. de Bunsen.*

(No. 101.)
Sir, *Damascus, December* 5, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 92 of the 30th October, I have the honour to inform you that an Italian engineer, a certain Signor Bello, who has been appointed Engineer-in-chief for the construction of the Mecca Railway, has arrived in Damascus and proceeded to Mezerib, the scene of his future labours. It appears that M. Bello's salary, which is officially stated to be 20,000 fr. per annum, will be paid out of funds provided for that and cognate purposes by the "Caisses Agricoles" of this vilayet, amounting in all to £ T. 100,000.

I hear, though I cannot guarantee the correctness of the report, that M. Bello has informed the authorities here that he will require for the undertaking 7,000 paid workmen—not, as at present, soldiers—who shall be, preferably, Italians and Egyptians. Further details will, I have no doubt, be forthcoming shortly, which, should they prove of interest, I shall not fail to communicate.

I hear some talk of the appointment of a German engineer in addition to M. Bello, but it is not so far officially confirmed.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

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No. 167.

*Viscount Gough to the Marquess of Lansdowne.*—(*Received December* 31.)

(No. 329.)
My Lord, *Berlin, December* 28, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship's despatch No. 294 of the 7th December, instructing me to make a communication to the Imperial German Government in favour of an arrangement between the concessionnaires of the Konieh-Bagdad Railway and the British Investors in the Mersina-Adana Railway.

At the suggestion of the Imperial Secretary of State, I explained the matter this



afternoon to the Under-Secretary of State, Dr. von Mühlberg, who is thoroughly conversant with all that concerns railways in Asia Minor, though not hitherto in possession of the case of the Mersina-Adana Railway.

On principle he is quite in favour of friendly arrangements in such cases, and related the story of the Smyrna-Kassaba Railway. It appears that an equitable arrangement had been made by the Germans with the representative of that Company, but at the last moment the shareholders refused their consent at a general meeting, and the Germans were obliged to settle with a French group instead.

In the present case Dr. von Mühlberg undertook to go into the matter thoroughly with Dr. von Siemens, President of the Deutsche Bank, and before I left the room he fixed an interview with that gentlemen for 12 o'clock to-morrow.

On my directing Dr. von Mühlberg's attention to the probability that any unfair treatment of British interests in the Mersina Railway would unfavourably effect the prospect of obtaining financial assistance in England for the construction of the railway to Bagdad, he inquired whether the converse might be understood, and whether the Konieh-Bagdad scheme had a fair prospect of financial support in England. I replied that in my opinion the correspondence in connection with the Mersina Railway showed that the eventuality of British financial support to the Konieh-Bagdad Railway was certainly contemplated as quite within the limits of possibility.

It was mentioned incidentally by Dr. von Mühlberg that the plan of making a railway, more in the centre north of Adana, had been for the present abandoned; that had been the original wish of the Sultan, but was more of a military than a commercial route.

The present tracing does not anywhere approach the sea, but Dr. von Mühlberg did not deny that a temporary railway to the sea for conveying material to the Konieh-Bagdad line might have to be built. Apart from this he could not conceive that the Konieh-Bagdad line passing Adana and forming a junction there with the Mersina Railway could in any way act prejudicially to the latter Company, to which it would presumably act as a remunerative feeder.

I have, &c.
(Signed) GOUGH.

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